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THE RELIGIONS OF JAPAN.*

The Empire of Japan contains about three hundred thousand temples, chapels and sanctuaries—Buddhist and Shintoist—and a hundred and fifty thousand priests, preaching friars, high-priests and high-priestesses. Its highways are full of pilgrims of different denominations—pilgrims of the Hundred Temples, pilgrims of the Eastern Province, pilgrims of the Four Provinces—of whom some carry bells, and some little drums. As Brittany has her wayside Calvaries and her old granite saints, so the hills of Nippon have their Buddhas carved in wood or stone, who—mitre on head and cross in hand—bear a strong resemblance to our own Gothic images. Everywhere, in silent by-ways and on solitary summits, along the fields, about the tea-houses, or beside the streams amid the springing corn, suspended on door-posts or the boughs of trees, or simply attached to a stick stuck in the earth, you see the *gohai*, a bit of lace paper, used as a scarecrow for birds and locusts, but also a divine symbol, and itself a god who drives away both crows and evil spirits, and protects alike the ripening harvest, and the souls of men. On midwinter evenings in Tokio, amid the rain and mud, I used to meet men scouring along al-

most naked, and ringing a little hand-bell in the fulfilment of a pious vow. The crowd of foot-passengers and *kurumayas* used to part before these perspiring racers, mud-splashed up to their shoulders, and the sharp tinkle of their bells died away in the darkness where sat the macaroni-sellers, all intoning their own peculiar cry. Every house, rich or poor, has an altar to its ancestors; where sticks of incense, cups of saké and offerings of rice and flowers are presented to them before the tablets on which are inscribed in Chinese characters the posthumous names of the departed souls. All children are taken to a temple—thirty-one days after their birth, if they are boys, thirty-three if they are girls—and dedicated to some divinity, who will act as guardian angel to the infant. All the dead, with folded hands and set upright upon their heels in their coffins, are accompanied to the place of burial by bonzes or *kanushi*. The gods are associated with every festival, and not a week passes but some quarter of the city lights up its temples and does homage to its patron. The loveliest sites are always reserved for places of prayer, where at every step you encounter an altar or a portico, or a sacred stone, or a bit of straw cord, which remind you that the smile of

* Translated for The Living Age.

nature is here made more bright by the presence of a supernatural host. In cherry-blossom time, when the people make holiday, and the whole city repairs to the Park of Oy no, the Buddhist temples, where a soft twilight, pierced by points of candle-light veils the forms of the idols and softens the splendor of lacquer and bronze, enhance the ecstasy of the spring by the fragrant dusk of interiors that echo to the beating of drums and the strains of sylvan pipes. Priests glide about among the altars like magnificent shades. Farther off, upon the platform within the Shinto precincts which is reserved for dancing, the little priestesses, with slow gesticulation, celebrate their own mysterious rite, while the crowd performs its devotions and partakes its banquets, murmuring softly all the time, amid the dazzling whiteness of the flowers and the intoxication of their faint bitter-sweet perfume. Youth and maiden laugh under their paper masks, and chase one another round the big white lanterns. Profane pleasure is closely entwined with all the old religions, and adapts its ordinarily fickle moods to their stability. For ages, nothing has changed upon the soil of Japan—neither the flowers nor the worship of the flowers, the music or the dances, the masks or the gods.

And still, Christianity and the philosophies of Europe have penetrated the country and are making their way. Catholicism discovered, beneath the ashes of many centuries, a few faint sparks, at which it lighted candles to the Virgin Mary. Tokio has its parishes now, and its parish churches, and the spire of a cathedral springs heavenward from the centre of Kioto. The Roman cross dominates the ports of Hakodate and Nagasaki at the northern and southern extremities of the empire. In the wake of our missionaries, who are trying to win back

souls to a faith sanctified by the blood of martyrs, come Russian popes and Protestant pastors conducting their own pious propaganda. I have described, in another place, the impression made upon me by the vast mass of the Orthodox Church standing as it does just opposite the Emperor's palace and actually dwarfing a whole quarter of the capital. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Anabaptists, Unitarians even—all the reformed sects—vie with one another in zeal, and astonish one no less by the varieties of their worship than by the varieties of their architecture. Some twenty-five thousand Japanese are converts to the gospel of Christ. And in this land, where Christians once endured so severe a political persecution, not only do authorized apostles freely dispute the conquest of souls, but the grossest enterprises of mysticism are developed in the most lawless fashion, and nobody minds. I have even seen defile before the eyes of the Japanese, without seeming to excite any particular surprise, the curious mountebanks and the epileptic trombones of the Salvation Army.

The general impression has been that the Japanese are indifferent about religion—their relations with the Deity being those of mere politeness. They salute the divine in whatever shape it may appear, and, by way of making all smooth, bespeak its favor for their pleasures, and give it a large share in all their frolics. Their inquisitive restlessness, it has been said, causes them to run after new gods; but the moment their curiosity is appeased they turn away, and come gaily back to the old practices; which are but the superstitious rites of their own peculiar atheism. Like Voltaire's little Jew, they murmur to the divinity before whom they burn their incense:—"Pardon me, but between ourselves, I do not really suppose that you exist!" Their innu-

merable chapels are only lightning-rods for defence against a problematical storm. They take the precaution of erecting them in places where human weakness is not wont to resist temptation. The pious expend more for wine than they do for wax, and their multiple gods furnish a screen for their multiple offences. Buddhists or Shintoists, they hardly know themselves what they are; or rather they are either or both, according to the time and circumstances. The faithful appear to be much less attached to the gods than to the dwellings of the gods. A temple does not necessarily change its *clientèle* when it changes its patron. The Amida of the Buddhist was enthroned here yesterday, and to-morrow the Shintoist mirror may reflect the Sun's divinity, but the self-same worshippers purr their prayers and strike their tinkling bells.

Nor do the Japanese put themselves out for their divinities. Their devotion is not encumbered by the stiff and lengthy ceremonies which prevail in social life and on public occasions. They dispatch their homage. They have learned the use of visiting-cards, and now one finds them everywhere—before tabernacles, at the feet of idols and even laid upon famous tombs. A well-bred Japanese will turn down his card for Lord Buddha or the divine Hachiman or the souls of the forty-seven Rōnins. By almost unanimous consent the Japanese—unprejudiced but courteous, ironical and superstitious—give their divinities all the more ample visible accommodations because they occupy so small a place in their thoughts. They grudge them neither gardens, fountains, hills nor forests; and purchase by their hospitality the right to leave them alone. Their mild paganism takes us back to the good old days when philosophers offered cocks to Æsculapius with a smile.

The theory is plausible and amusing,

but my own suspicion is that those who thus judge the people of Japan are misled by appearances, and refer everything to their own Occidental ideas. The more I have seen of many men under different skies, the more firmly have I become persuaded that the diversities among them result mainly from their different ways of conceiving and of honoring the unknowable. Neither those rude passions which awake the primitive animal within us, nor the petty observances of social intercourse vary much from one continent to another. But the moment you get into a people's inner life, you discern the light and heat of a mysterious ray; and eyes which are unaccustomed to that kind of illumination, distinguish values and shades but imperfectly in it. I never felt myself so much a Christian at heart as after I had lived among the Buddhists. Everything in us, our indifference, our very irreligion, if I may venture to say so, is Christianized by such a contact. Our sceptics are not on a par with theirs; our pagans are not in the least like the impious among them. If the majority of the Europeans whom I have met in Japan—believers and unbelievers alike—regard the Japanese as mere miscreants, it is only because a religion which does not pretend to a monopoly of salvation seems to them no religion at all. The most amazing thing about this people, to ourselves, is their complete lack of fanaticism. The kind of toleration which is just beginning to creep into our manners rather than our minds, is the oldest of moral habits in the Far East. I should call it the distinctive mark of the yellow races; and it is the result neither of doubt nor of indifference, but of a deep-seated reverence for human thought. It comes naturally out of the difficulty the Oriental finds in conceiving the absolute; and a virtue which reckons among us as one of the

loftiest of all, because it is achieved only by a long series of internal conflicts and victories, signifies among the Japanese only a certain metaphysical weakness. They do not understand our love of truth—a prerogative which we have purchased by ages of intolerance. They do not search for truth as we do, who continue to seek long after we have found it. Religion has never embodied for them an ideal, unalterable beauty. Their acts of faith do not involve the surrender of their whole being; and the word *believe* does not mean the same thing to us and to them.

Never question a Japanese about his religious convictions. You would be asking him what he has probably never asked himself. Moreover, if his conscience is clear, what are his convictions to you? They concern himself and himself only. He never feels the need of sharing his piety with those about him. That piety is curiously reserved and silent. I have many a time visited the popular temples of Tokio, but never once have I received the impression of an assembly of communicants making the same prayer to the same god. They come in one by one, perform whatever rites they please, uncover sometimes, and sometimes not, bow or prostrate themselves, pause or pass; every man manifesting by his attitude his full confidence in the divinity whom he addresses, or his half-confidence or his quarter-confidence. Nothing suggests the silent effusion of hearts that are similarly touched or convicted; but, on the other hand, no man questions the sincerity of another's prayers. Their eyes do not peep from under half-closed lids in impertinent scrutiny of the devotions of others. The surly controversies of the Buddhist sects affect the mass of the people no more than the rivalries of merchants affect the ordinary buyer. They are the quarrels of

monks who so far from following the quest of truth, are bitterly disputing one with another the right to organize fraud.

Japanese apostles are usually enthusiastic recluses; Japanese bigots are taciturn visionaries; Japanese doubters are merely indifferent. The gods do not draw human souls together, but neither do they divide them. Naught is known here of damnable errors or burning heresies or passionate schisms; nor of that most imbecile of all bigotries—a militant atheism.

The sum and substance of divine truth, as received by a Japanese soul, is contained in tradition; but that tradition does not present itself to him under the form of dogma. He can take it or leave it. He may even add something to it. The place of religion is in the domain of sensibility and fancy. It never imposes itself upon the reason with intent to subdue and humiliate it. Moreover, the reason of a Japanese does not work like ours. More ingenious than profound, more subtle than tenacious, it is puzzled by the great mysteries, but not tormented by them. The riddles of this world pique the curiosity of these Orientals neither more nor less than so many rebuses. The Japanese carry into their modes of argumentation the same taste for the bizarre that characterizes their diversions. Their dialectic is a series of surprises, and it is the unexpected that convinces them. What is inexplicable has for them a delicious fascination. Our logic would be simply brutal to them—sure to derange the delicate complexity of the universe. That most humane harmony which the Greek genius managed to realize in polytheism would be utterly unintelligible to them. The extraordinary mixture of sacred and profane, of which their life affords so many examples, is but the gulleless image of those everlasting antinomies which they confound in the same mist

of dreams. They live enveloped in a religious atmosphere as clear and soft as the air of their country, and they never so much as ask themselves whether they are religious.

Objections are made to their superstitions, their pitiable superstitions! Such it is, no doubt, to attribute to a fox the power of bewitching a man, and to believe that a badger beats his own belly like a drum when the moon shines bright. But similar prodigies teem in the rural districts of the West—whether they be inhabited by Catholics, Lutherans or Orthodox Greeks. And while I may know that religion differs from superstition, I am not altogether clear about the dividing line between them. Tell me if you can where the vegetable kingdom leaves off and the animal begins! The Japanese have the keenest possible sense of the invisible, which translates itself among them into a pantheism that is rather instinctive than rational. They are not misled and imperilled by their superstitions, except in certain cases of supposed demoniacal possession. Their superstitions are not rude and malign, but simply fantastical, like the twisted trunks of their old trees, or harmless, like the native animals. They sanctify the obscure dreaming of the plant and the force that sleeps in the stone. They are mixed up with the worship of the gods and of the dead, and even those who smile at them would hesitate to attack, being moved by the thought that they may veil some inviolable thing.

Ever tolerant in temper and distrustful of exclusive deities, apparently detached, and yet essentially reverential toward the mystery in which our life is involved, the Japanese neither push their faith to the point of moral certitude, nor their scepticism to the point of negation. They are able to rest in the provisional, and, in religion as in politics, their inward peace is founded

upon equivocations. Shintoism and Buddhism have divided the conscience of Japan between them for fifteen hundred years without ever rending it asunder. We hear it said sometimes that the two forms of worship are complementary; and so they are, for the minds that compare them. The one makes nature divine, and sees in men only bodies to be purified. The other beholds in nature only a series of deceitful and rapidly shifting illusions, repudiates the vain charms of the flesh and mortifies the desires of the soul. The one breathes primitive innocence, and the excellence of created things. The other exhales an infinite sadness and the faint odor of ashes. The Japanese have never decided between these two systems, but the admirable quietude of spirit which enables them to entertain the most contradictory ideas has stood them in good stead. They owe to the paradoxical accord established between these two religions all which gives to their moral life a semblance of complexity, and to their ordinarily shallow intelligence its moments of depth. To the same cause is due their perpetual passage from supreme simplicity to supreme refinement, their candid mysticism, their melancholy naturalism, their feeble conception of the sublime. You have seen those broad, still sheets of shallow water, through which a child may wade without wetting his knees. They would be limpid if they were deeper, so as not to lose transparence and receive color from the grasses and pebbles of the bed. But at sunset, when the splendors that foretell the dark blaze over the mirrored surface, these broad reaches of water seem to have abysmal depths. The piety of Japan is widespread, but it disappears in the sand. Shintoism gives it the color of the soil, the rocks, the growing plants. But it is Buddhism that suffuses it with the last ruddy reflection from a

conflagration of thought in which the worlds have been consumed.

When a cultivated Japanese talks to you about Shintoism, he is apt to speak either vaguely and rather contemptuously or with the constrained air of a *parvenu* who has been reminded of his humble origin. But when you reflect that the same man feels a similar repugnance to receiving you in his house at all, and that politeness, as he conceives it, consists in belittling all that belongs to him, and of which he is especially fond, you begin to suspect that behind a religion, restored and made official for purely political purposes, there may lurk no end of sentiments and traditions which are all the more precious to your interlocutor because he dissimulates, or affects to despise them. Shintoism is not merely the cult of imperial majesty; it is the religion of Japanese nationalism. It is to the Shintoist temples, or *mya*, that new-born infants are taken and when the invisible god passes, delicately clothed in lace, it is the Shintoist *gohei* who decides what the infant shall be called. The child may subsequently adopt the doctrine of Confucius or the visions of Amida, he may even yield to the persuasions of proselyting foreigners; but he has been baptized a Shintoist, and the ancient gods of his country have taken him into their keeping to such good purpose that the soul of him will never lose their simple and yet stately impress.

An extremely conservative, yet open-minded Japanese one day said to me; "We are all Shintoists; and you, monsieur, to whom I speak, you are one too! When I travelled in France I saw everywhere in your colleges and town-houses, *busts of the Republic*. Well, that is Shintoism!"

"It has this disadvantage as compared with yours," I answered, "that it is perpetually changing."

"Quite so," he replied. "An old friend

of mine, who had been in France in 1869, told me that the Shintoism of that day had moustaches. That is the danger of symbols in human shape. We, in our simplicity, are perhaps cleverer than you with your high culture. Our Shintoism which is figured by a gem, a sword, a mirror, is bound to live as long as the Japanese value honor, *finesse* and their own counterfeit presentment." And with a smile broadening his smooth moon-face, he presently added: "We must respect that mirror, monsieur! Japan sees her own reflection in it, and thinks it fine."

Let us follow the advice of my whimsical friend, and search the sacred mirror curiously for those primitive and permanent characteristics wherein the soul of Japan is manifested, which make it a source of wonder and enchantment even to itself.

I have made a point of reading Shintoist books and of consulting those priests who have a special repute for wisdom. Honest folk I found them—one and all—these sacristans and churchwardens of the imperial cult; good fathers of families and conscientious in the discharge of their duties, but as weak in theology as they were poor in philosophy. They welcomed me to their houses which adjoin the temples, and the houses were all empty and spotlessly clean; so empty, in fact, that it seemed as if not even the shadow of an idea could ever have grazed their fine mattings, and the rustic sculpture of their wooden walls. I looked in vain for the *kakémono* which the humblest peasant unrolls upon the wall of his alcove, for the flower in the bronze vase which suggests all the flowers that blow, or the dwarf tree which is the symbol of an entire forest. The tiny tree, so eloquently gnarled and twisted, the single flower, the decorative painting—all these Buddhist ornaments were absent from

the archaic dwelling where the gentle spirit of Japan abandons itself to its dreams.

Nevertheless, my hosts, as they knelt upon their mats, beside their tea-cups, contrived to initiate me into their theogony. I was made to perceive by the senses both of sight and smell how the gods were originally brought forth. The earliest harvests ripened upon their remains. The brother of the sun-goddess, in a fit of rage against his sister, flung a flayed horse through the web that she was spinning, and immediately earth, air, sea and the regions under the earth began to swarm with divinities, big and little, the shortest of whose names were a yard long. This tale, gravely and literally repeated, imparted to the learned doctors from whose lips it came, an air of infantile senility. Yet their legends are no less rich than those whereby the Aryan genius attained to a consciousness of itself and of the universe. We find again, in them, the sublime absurdities which would seem in the religion of every people to carry proof of a primitive revelation; for, strange as it may appear, not only have all races experienced the same need of faith, but the imagination of all has been dominated by the same delirious dreams. These legends are like fruits of Eden plucked by humanity from the off-shoots of its own cradle. But they dry and shrivel when men are merely amused by their brilliant aspect, and will not take the trouble to test their mysterious flavor. Whence came to the Japanese those grandiose conceptions from which they, in their triviality, have merely extracted insignificant chimeras or frigid allegories? Their philosophers and exegetical scholars, instead of interpreting these legends, have gone into childish ecstasies over their improbabilities. The ablest of them have discovered under the heap of ruin into which their

mythology had fallen certain principles imported by the Dutch merchants, and they have used these to turn the Chinese errors into ridicule and to glorify themselves at our expense. "Just look at these barbarians," they said; "what slow and plodding minds theirs must be when it takes them centuries to find out that the earth revolves! We have known it ever since our gods bent over the Chaos on whose surface the earth swam in a soft mass, like floating fat, and began stirring it with their untiring spears!" No one of the ancient theogonies, it may be admitted, ever hit upon a finer symbol of the earth's perpetual motion, but the thinkers of Japan discovered it just a little too late. They were on their mettle, and resolved to discover some sort of harmony between the wild gesticulations of their mythic phantoms, and the definite discoveries of foreign science. But the time had gone by for revivifying the miracles of the early gods. Moreover, that mob of silent divinities had nothing to say to the moralist. They had simplified all problems beforehand. Japan is the country of the gods; the Japanese people are children of the gods and as such they have their share in the divine wisdom. They know all things congenitally. The difference between them and other nations is not one of degree but of kind. A divine race, naturally happy and infallible, could they have believed a system of morals to be necessary for them, they would have owned themselves inferior to the brutes by the same token. In these very terms the Shintoist doctrine was set forth, toward the close of the eighteenth century, by the venerable Dr. Motowori, and the priests whom I consulted concerning the destiny of the human race expressed themselves, if I may say so, almost in Motowori's words.

The Shintoist mirror has reflected the image of a prodigious national van-

ity, of the most beaming spirit of self-complacency ever bred in man by his own ignorance. For ages the poverty of Japanese thought was perfectly imaged there, where no soul ever learned to know its own semblance. To-day its broadening surface continues to assure these people of their divine pre-eminence, and if some have ceased implicitly to believe, a good many feel like that honest son of Japan who was travelling in foreign parts, and suffered himself to be exploited by a sharper as a grandson of the Mikado. He was duped and fleeced, of course, at every turn, but remarked when he told me about it afterwards: "I knew very well that it was not true, but it flattered me!" Now Shintoism flatters the Japanese on their impracticable side, which is that of their insular pride. But this very pride, which is insufferable when they attempt to philosophize, becomes in the hearts of the lowly only a conservative instinct, and a sacred love of their natal soil. Japanese thought—presumptuous and sterile though it be—has living roots of an exquisite delicacy. To estimate it at its worth is to discover the secret of the country. If Shintoism paralyzes the speculative faculty in man, it also enables him to grasp two or three essential principles, of which the form is made perfect by practice, and which have sufficed for the development, if not of a great people, at least of a lovable, healthful and even powerful one.

Without Bible or dogma, or promise of a future life, Shintoism holds its disciple to the earth, and bounds his vision by the objects that surround him. Those objects are beautiful. Men tread, in a sort of tranquil ecstasy, the flowery "way of the gods," which climbs mountains and drops into valleys, but is never lost to view. Hills, dales, forests, bright glimpses of islands upon the bosom of the deep—all

take their color from the passing season—the dark green of summer, the autumnal crimson. Snow falls in springtime, upon the sacred way, and winter has its perfumes. Even the thunderbolts of nature are launched with a smile. Amid all this light and beauty the first necessity of the human being is to render himself worthy of it by scrupulous cleanliness of body. He dreads anything like a stain—the stain of birth and the stain of death—all, in short, which is able to deface the ideal he pursues of brilliant and perfect sanity.

Hence the fundamental rite of Shintoism was a system of hygiene. The endless purifications accompanying birth and following upon funerals are among the most persistent of the ancient customs. Salt is habitually scattered about a sick-chamber and over the persons of those returning from a burial. Salt is an expiatory antiseptic. Religious ablutions have transformed themselves into daily home baths. From the Emperor down to the humblest *kurumaya*, every Jap takes his morning dip. Dirt, whether on the person or in the surroundings, is a scandal; a mark of negligence and almost of sacrilege. For the gods are omnipresent and the word *kami* is applied not alone to creative divinities and the higher orders of men. The mountain is *kami*; the stormy sea is *kami*; the tree, the shrub, the fruit, the flower, the stone, which all had the gift of language in the early time, are, every one, *kami*. The handiwork of men who resemble the gods may be *kami*. The air—that clear, life-giving atmosphere of Japan—is full of *kamis*, divine couriers, who wait upon souls at prayer. These worshipful beings, who reveal themselves to the heart, as the breeze is revealed to the sense, must not suffer profanation. Cleanliness in the house is a simple act of piety. To soil the matting or to throw

anything impure into the ashes of the *hidashi* would be an insult to the Invisible One. We treat the coarse articles of our house furniture very rudely. We never endow them with life except when we are in a rage and vent our anger in abuse of them. Japan is perhaps the only country on earth where persons are polite to things. The touch of the Japanese is light and respectful, but his pious precautions are for the things of his own country only. Never attribute to mere inexperience the carelessness with which they often handle European objects, which are profane to them because foreign, and may be soiled with perfect impunity. We find the same system of hygiene for purposes of purification at the basis of all religions; but among the Japanese it is no more symbolic than to the bird who bathes and dries his plumage in the sun. It implies no original defilement, but simply makes the cleanliness of the conscious creature correspond with that of the unconscious creation.

This people, so enamored of the grace of running water, of the stones which it polishes, and the vapors which it exhales, declines to relegate its dead to any sad underworld, where the shades go moaning because they are shades. Whether the worship of the dead preceded all other forms of worship, I do not know; nor how long it took the human race to bridge the abyss between itself and them by the traditional chain of phantoms. But the Shintoism which proclaimed the celestial origin of the Japanese people made haste to confound the dead with the gods who created the country. The dead are the dearest and most revered of their *kami*. To them are confided the succession of the seasons, the management of wind and rain, and of good and bad fortune. They rule the realm of the living, and live themselves an intangible but very real life. They

smell the flowers that have been culled for them, and quench their thirst at the cup of cold water poured out for their behoof. They love music, dancing—everything, in short, which propitiates the celestial divinities. The very best painter of Japanese life, Lafcadio Hearn, tells us the authentic story of a *danseuse* whose lover died, and who every night, in her solitary cot, at the hour when he had been wont to visit her, used to put on her most beautiful apparel and smile and dance by lamplight before his funeral tablet. This perpetual miracle of the real presence of the dead, causes a prodigious development among these people of the sense of the invisible. The Japanese sleep, wake, walk and talk in the society of spirits. The dead act upon the living, and the living react upon them, and the world of sense is inextricably mixed up with the supernatural one. The Official Journal informs us, from time to time, that the *manes* of a gallant soldier have been promoted, or that the Emperor has conferred a higher rank on some deceased person whose son has distinguished himself. I have seen Europeans laughing over such things, but they would not think of laughing at the poet who said of his ancestors: "If I write their history, they will descend from me!" Those Europeans have their own Pantheons, and do they not honor their famous dead by public promotions in bronze or marble? It is the same idea, only stripped of its intuitive force, and become coldly intellectual. The Japanese, who has no ideas except those derived from the senses, and for whom the spirits of the dead are not mere abstractions, obeys, in all simplicity, those primitive suggestions, whereof the words of our great poets are often but a revival or an echo. There are verses of Lamartine's, vague as the first rhythmic utterance of the human soul—there are images in Victor Hugo

—sibylline, unearthly—which would assuredly be, I will not say better understood but more instantaneously felt, by a Japanese peasant than by a Parisian bourgeois.

Neither science nor psychology, neither theses on heredity nor treatises on evolution, nor the dramas and romances which essay to represent such things in tableaux, or put them upon the stage, not all our logic, all our eloquence and all our art, avail to perpetuate the religion of the past, like the little household altar where the Japanese hold intercourse with their dead. Our theories are admirable, and we understand much better than the peoples of the Far East the extreme humility of our origin. We are instructed concerning all that cumulative effort of preceding generations, which our more humane life represents. Our common consciousness has been enriched by grief, patience, thought and love. We have been taught sympathy for those whose conquests in arms or letters constitute a virtual enlargement of our own frontier, and who, by the very fact of expressing the ideal of our race, incite us to its more ardent pursuit. No such notions as these are formally imparted to the Japanese, and yet they understand, they feel them, in deeper depths of the soul than are ever stirred by the thrill of poesy, or the dialectic of the philosopher. Their present has not broken, if I may venture to say so, the umbilical cord which unites it with the past. Patriotism, courage in the field, family affection, an inviolable reverence for the mother who has carried in her own body something unalterable and divine—all these virtues are but honor due the dead and faithfully paid.

The ancient legislators of Japan, who compelled children to pay the debts of their parents, were but incorporating in the civil code the moral law of Shintoism. And in those remote times

when a man might sell himself without incurring any infamy by the sacrifice of his personal liberty for laudable motives, it was nevertheless decreed that children selling themselves for the benefit of their parents should suffer degradation that filial piety might prove itself ready for the hardest sacrifice, and the merit of self-denial be enhanced by the severest kind of suffering.

Ancestors, transfigured into genii, will admit foreign religions into the home, on condition that the new gods refrain from insulting the old. A rude or ill-conducted propaganda would be sure to end in the revolt of a fanaticism rather civic than religious. To touch the dead is to stir up against the intruder the very soil of the country. Yet these multitudinous dead were by no means all good people, and it is customary to appease by offerings those who have left bad reputations behind them. Not that their peevish ghosts are in the least like our spirits of darkness. If the Japanese mind has arrived at the conception of a certain dualism in nature it has never imagined evil, absolute and eternal. The Spirits of Perversity, as they are called, are not seeking to compass the ruin of the living. They are even, in some sort, sacred, because their influence, though malign, is an element in the national atmosphere. Moreover, the harmful exhalations of certain isolated tombs are carried off and rendered innocuous by that broadly benevolent spirit which is the breath of life in Japan.

I have made the pilgrimage of Isé where, every twenty years, the holiest temples of Shintoism are burned to the ground and then re-built. A sea teeming with finny life broke, in long waves, upon the sacred sands of Yamato, and its salt odors were carried inland across the rice and clover fields, as far as the mountains which closed

the horizon. Deep verdure, furrowed by waves of red blossoms, filled with a rich, dark radiance the hollow valleys and gorges of the hills. All about were flourishing farms, brooks, wooden-bridges, quaintly shaped rocks and old, old trees. I was quite alone, except for my *kurumaya*, who did not know a word of my language. The roads were swarming with pilgrims—the rich clad in dark silks, while their daughters wore gay, light colors—the others, dusty, staff in hand, having bags of oiled paper full of amulets hung about their necks. I have a distinct remembrance of one young woman, who trudged after her husband and led by the hand a small son in the costume of a European general. The dress was incongruous enough, amid the Japanese throng, and yet it was rather touching—the little Japan of days to come, taken to the altars of the past!

We all passed into a glorious thicket, in whose changing lights and shadows all the diffused sweetness of that rare landscape seemed concentrated. Devious ways led down to a limpid lake, where the pilgrims bathed among the reflections of overhanging boughs; while above, the main avenue climbed the mountain in zig-zags, with its paving of round pebbles, flanked by two foot-ways of pale yellow earth. At intervals tall porticos, or *torii*—long occupied as perches by the sacred birds who herald the dawn, lifted above our heads their horizontal or slightly arching beams. And so we came to the temple of the Sun Goddess—a shrine universally venerated, where every year, in the rice season, an imperial envoy comes and offers the first fruits of the harvest. The steep, thatched roof, whose outermost beams are prolonged and cross in the air, the encircling veranda, raised only two steps above the ground, and the doors turning on pivots, all betray the primitive architecture of the temple. The court, with

its tessellated pavement, made of pebbles worn smooth by the action of water, is like a dry sand-beach. The surrounding walls of cryptomeria wood look like the palisade of a corral. Before the entrance door, which it is not lawful to pass, hangs a white, transparent veil, that conceals nothing, unless it be the invisible. There is no decoration; there are no images. The mirror, the *gohai*, the wands wound with paper, the sacred relics and the splendid silk stuffs, and the harness-ornaments for the sacred steeds, are all put away in a modest building adjoining, and only brought out on high holidays. Yet in all this disconcerting and perishable simplicity, there is a something mysteriously divine. The Shintoist temple, of all those which I have visited in the Far East, is the one which has left upon my profane soul the most profoundly religious impression. It may illustrate the spiritual indigence of the Japanese, but I seem to detect in the soul of the nation a certain mystic spark which fuses the simplest elements into something new and exquisite. With a few beams rudely squared, a few pebbles gathered from the river's bed, a little straw, some upright posts, a thin curtain, and the charm of magic scenery, they contrive to give one the impression that a god is present.

I once knew, in South America, a peasant's son who became rich and powerful and built himself a palatial residence, surrounded by a wonderful portico. In the very centre of the domain, however, there was a poor little cabin, and in it an old woman sat and span. It was the hut where the rich man was born, and the old woman was his mother. And, in like manner, the Japanese, despite the influx of Buddhist magnificence have piously kept sacred to the gods of the soil their first lowly dwelling, which, though little better than a stable, is yet their

traditional sanctuary. It is the sacred love of country which renders imposing these beams hewn in the forest, these pebbles polished by the waves, this thatch grown in the glebe. Sophists, confused by bad humanitarian dreams, have pretended that patriotism is an element of division, but I know well that if I had it not I should be farther removed even than now from these

men who are so alien to me in education and in race. Love of country is the great interpreter of hearts, and by this all comprehend one another. There among the pious pilgrims in the forest of Isé, I trod with all reverence that earth whereon when a man kneels or falls prone he believes himself nearer to the gods, because he is nearer to the soil.

Revue des Deux Mondes.

André Bellesort.

(To be concluded.)

ATTHIS.

*I loved thee, Atthis, long ago,
Loved thee, nay, breathe it soft and low
For all its shattered sweetness, so—
I loved thee, Atthis, long ago!*

Once, more than life thy slightest curl
I loved to touch, to call mine,—Girl—
Thou wonder wrought in rose and pearl—
How Time has changed us in his whirl!

Yea, then thy hands about my brow
Were more than all these laurels: how
They thrilled me uttering every vow!
I cannot quite forget—canst thou?

*I loved thee: scarcely could I say
"I love thee" in that bygone day;
Too sweet a thing it seemed to play
The changes on. Said I alway?*

Ah! Wild regrets o'er ruins! Sweet,
Too wayward are Love's stealthy feet;
How all my rhythmic pulses beat
The sad refrain; relax, repeat—

*I loved thee, Atthis, long ago,
Loved thee, nay, breathe it soft and low,
For all its shattered sweetness, so—
I loved thee, Atthis, long ago,*

From "An Iscult Idyll and Other Poems."

G. Constant Lounsbury.

THE NOVELS OF M. RENE BAZIN.

When I was young I had the pleasure of knowing a prominent Plymouth Brother, an intelligent and fanatical old gentleman, into whose house there strayed an attractive volume, which he forbade his grown-up son and daughter to peruse. A day or two later his children, suddenly entering his library, found him deep in the study of the said dangerous book, and gently upbraided him with doing what he had expressly told them not to do. He replied with calm, good-humor, "Ah, but you see. I have a much stronger spiritual digestion than you have!" This question of the "spiritual digestion" is one which must always trouble those who are asked to recommend one or another species of reading to an order of undefined readers. Who shall decide what books are and what are not proper to be read? There are some people who can pasture unpolluted upon the memoirs of Casanova, and others who are disturbed by "The Idylls of the King." They tell me that in Minneapolis "Othello" is considered objectionable; our own great-aunts thought "Jane Eyre" no book for girls. In the vast complicated garden of literature it is always difficult to say where the toxicologist comes in, and what distinguishes him from the purveyor of a salutary moral tonic. In recent French romance, everybody must acknowledge, it is practically impossible to lay down a hard and fast rule.

The object of these pages, however, is not to decide how far the daring apologist can go in the recommendation of new French novel-writers, but to offer to the notice of shy English readers a particularly "nice" one. But, before attempting to introduce M. René Bazin, I would reflect a moment on the very curious condition of the French

novel in general at the present time. No one who observes the entire field of current French literature without prejudice will deny that the novel is passing through a period which must prove highly perilous to its future, a period at once of transition and of experiment. The school of realism or naturalism, which was founded upon the practice of Balzac in direct opposition to the practices of George Sand and of Dumas père, achieved, about twenty years ago, one of those violent victories which are more dangerous to a cause than defeat itself. It was in 1880 that M. Zola published that volume of polemical criticism which had so far-reaching an effect in France and elsewhere, and which was strangely ignored in England—"Le Roman Expérimental." This was just the point of time at which the Rougon-Macquart series of socio-pathological romances was receiving its maximum of hostile attention. M. Zola's book of criticism was a plausible, audacious, magnificently casuistical plea, not merely for the acceptance of the realistic method, but for the exclusion of every other method from the processes of fiction. It had its tremendous effect; during the space of some five years the "romanciers naturalistes," with M. Zola at their head, had it all their own way. Then came, in 1885, "La Terre," an object-lesson in the abuse of the naturalistic formula, and people began to open their eyes to its drawbacks. And then we all dissolved in laughter over the protest of the "clinq purs," and the defection of a whole group of disciples. M. Zola, like the weary Titan that he is, went on, but the prestige of naturalism was undermined.

But, meanwhile, the old forms of

procedure in romance had been dishonored. It was not enough that the weak places in the realistic armor should be pierced by the arrows of a humaner criticism; the older warriors whom Goliath had overthrown had to be set on their legs again. And it is not to be denied that some of them were found to be dreadfully the worse for wear. No one who had read Flaubert and the Goncourts, no one who had been introduced to Tolstoy and Dostoleffsky could any longer endure the trick of Cherbuliez. It was like going back to William Black after Stevenson and Mr. Barrie. Even Ferdinand Fabre, the Thomas Hardy of the Cevennes, seemed to have lost his savor. The novels of Octave Feuillet were classics, but no one yearned for fresh imitations of "Monsieur de Camors." Pierre Loti turned more and more exclusively to adventures of the *ego* in tropical scenery. Alphonse Daudet, after a melancholy eclipse of his fresh early genius, passed away. The influence of the Goncourts, even before the death of Edmond, although still potent, spread into other fields of intellectual effort, and became negligible so far as the novel, pure and simple, was concerned. What was most noteworthy in the French *belles-lettres* of ten years ago was the brilliant galaxy of critics that swam into our ken. In men like MM. Lemaître, Anatole France, Brunetière and Gaston Paris, the intelligent reader found purveyors of entertainment which was as charming as fiction, and much more solid and stimulating. Why read dull novels when one could be so much better amused by a new volume of "La Vie Littéraire?"

In pure criticism there is now again a certain depression in French literature. The most brilliant of the group I have just mentioned has turned from the adventures of books to the analysis of life. But the author of "L'Anneau

d'Améthyste" is hardly to be counted among the novelists. His philosophical satires, sparkling with wit and malice, incomparable in their beauty of expression, are doubtless the most exquisite productions proceeding to-day from the pen of a Frenchman, but "L'Orme du Mail" is no more a novel than "Friendship's Garland" is. Among the talents which were directly challenged by the theories of the naturalistic school, the one which seems to have escaped least battered from the fray is that of M. Paul Bourget. He stands apart, like Mr. Henry James—the European writer with whom he is in closest relation. But even over this delicious writer a certain change is passing. He becomes less and less a novelist, and more and more a writer of *nouvelles* or short stories. "La Duchesse Bleue" was not a *roman*, it was a *nouvelle* writ large and in the volume of consummate studies of applied psychology ("Un Homme d'Affaires"), which reaches me as I write these lines, I find a M. Paul Bourget more than ever removed from the battle-field of common fiction, more than ever isolated in his exquisite attenuation of the enigmas of the human heart. On the broader field, M. Marcel Prévost and M. Paul Hervieu support the Balzac tradition after their strenuous and intelligent fashion. It is these two writers who continue for us the manufacture of the "French novel" pure and simple. Do they console us for Flaubert and Maupassant and Goncourt? Me, I am afraid, they do but faintly console.

Elsewhere, in the French fiction with which the century closed, we see little but experiment, and that experiment largely takes the form of *pastiche*. One thing has certainly been learned by the brief tyranny of realism, namely, that the mere exterior phenomena of experience, briefly observed, do not exhaust the significance of life. It is not to be denied that a worthy intel-

lectual effort, a desire to make thought take its place again in æsthetic literature, marks the tentatives, often very unsatisfactory in themselves and unrelated to one another, which are produced by the younger novelists in France. These books address, it must never be forgotten, an audience far more cultivated, far less hide-bound in its prejudices, than does the output of the popular English novelist. It is difficult to conceive of a British Huysmans translating, with the utmost disregard for plot, the voluptuous languors of religion; it is even more difficult to conceive of a British Maurice Barrès engaged, in the form of fiction, in the glorification of a theory of individualism. It is proper that we should do honor to the man who writes and to the public that reads, with zeal and curiosity, these attempts to deal with spiritual problems in the form of fiction. But it is surely not unfair to ask whether the experiment so courageously attempted is perfectly successful? It is not improper to suggest that neither "La Cathédrale" nor "Les Déracinés" is exactly to be styled an ideal novel.

More completely fulfilling the classic purpose of the romance, the narrative, are some of the experimental works in fiction which I have indicated as belonging to the section of *pastiche*. In this class I will name but three, the "Aphrodite" of M. Pierre Louys, "La Nichina" of M. Hugues Rebelle, and "La Route d'Émeraude" of M. Eugène Demolder. These, no doubt, have been the most successful, and the most deservedly successful, of a sort of novel in these last years in France, books in which the life of past ages has been resuscitated with a full sense of the danger which lurks in pedantry and in a didactic dryness. With these may be included the extraordinary pre-historic novels of the brothers Rosny. This kind of story suffers from two dangers.

Firstly, nothing so soon loses its pleasurable surprise, and becomes a tiresome trick, as *pastiche*. Already, in the case of more than one of the young writers just mentioned, fatigue of fancy has obviously set in. The other peril is a heritage from the Naturalists, and makes the discussion of recent French fiction extremely difficult in England, namely, the determination to gain a sharp, vivid effect by treating with surgical coolness the maladies of society. Hence—to skate as lightly as possible over this thin ice—the difficulty of daring to recommend to English readers a single book in recent French fiction. We have spoken of a strong spiritual digestion; but most of the romances of the latest school require the digestion of a Commissioner in Lunacy or of the matron in a Lock hospital.

Therefore—and not to be always pointing to the Quaker-colored stories of M. Edouard Rod—the joy and surprise of being able to recommend, without the possibility of a blush, the latest of all the novelists of France. It has been necessary, in the briefest language, to sketch the existing situation in French fiction, in order to make appreciable the purity, the freshness, the simplicity of M. René Bazin. It is only within the last season or two that he has come prominently to the front, although he has been writing quietly for about fifteen years. It would be absurd to exaggerate. M. Bazin is not, and will not be here presented as being, a great force in literature. If it were the part of criticism to deal in negatives, it would be easy to mention a great many things which M. Bazin is not. Among others he is not a profound psychologist; people who like the novels of M. Elémir Bourges, and are able to understand them, will, unquestionably pronounce "Les Noëllet" and "La Sarcelle Bleue" very insipid. But it is possible that the French novelists of these last five years have been try-

ing to be a great deal too clever, that they have starved the large reading public with the extravagant intellectuality of their stories. Whether that be so or not, it is at least pleasant to have one man writing, in excellent French, refined, cheerful and sentimental novels of the most ultra-modest kind, books that every girl may read, that every guardian of youth may safely leave about in any room of the house. I do not say—I am a thousand miles from thinking—that this is everything; but I protest—even in face of the indignant Bar of Bruges—that this is much.

Little seems to have been told about the very quiet career of M. René Bazin, who is evidently an enemy to self-advertisement. Of his purely literary career all that is known appears to be that in 1886 he published a romance, "*Ma Tante Giron*," to which I shall presently return, which fell almost unnoticed from the press. It found its way, however, to one highly appropriate reader, M. Ludovic Halévy, to whom its author was entirely unknown. M. Halévy was so much struck with the cleanliness and freshness of this new writer that he recommended the editor of the *Journal des Débats* to secure him as a contributor. To the amazement of M. Bazin, he was invited, by a total stranger, to join the staff of the *Débats*. He did so, fourteen years ago, and for that newspaper he has written almost exclusively ever since, and there his successive novels and books of travel have first appeared. It is said that M. Halévy tried, without success, to induce the French Academy to give one of its prizes to "*Ma Tante Giron*." The attempt failed, but no doubt it was to the same admirer that was due the crowning of M. René Bazin's second story, "*Une Tache d'Encre*." One can hardly doubt that the time is not far distant when M. Bazin will himself be in a position to secure the prizes of the Academy for still

younger aspirants. This account of M. Bazin is meagre, but although it is all that I know of his blameless career, I feel sure that it is, as Froude once said on a parallel occasion, "nothing to what the angels know."

When we turn to M. Bazin's earliest novel, "*Ma Tante Giron*," it is not difficult to divine what it was that attracted to this stranger the amiable author of "*L'Abbé Constantine*" and "*La Famille Cardinal*." It is a sprightly story of provincial life, a dish, as was wickedly said of one of M. Halévy's own books, consisting of nothing but angels served up with a white sauce of virtue. The action is laid in a remote corner of Western France, the Craonnais, half in Vendée, half in Brittany. There are fine old sporting characters, who bring down hares at fabulous distances to the reproach of younger shots; there are excellent curés, the souls of generosity and unworldliness, with a touch of eccentricity to keep them human. There is an admirable young man, the Baron Jacques, who falls desperately in love with the beautiful and modest Mlle. de Seigny, and has just worked himself up to the point of proposing, when he unfortunately hears that she has become the greatest heiress in the country-side. Then, of course, his honorable scruples outweigh his passion, and he takes to a capricious flight. Mlle. de Seigny, who loves him, will marry no one else, and both are horribly unhappy, until Aunt Giron, who is the comic providence of the tale, rides over to the Baron's retreat, and brings him back, a blushing captive, to the feet of the young lady. All comes well, of course, and the curtain falls to the sound of wedding-bells, while Aunt Giron, brushing away a tear, exclaims, "*La joie des autres, comme cela fait du bien!*"

But "*Ma Tante Giron*" is really the least bit too ingenuous for the best of

good little girls. Hence, we are not surprised to find M. Bazin's next novel at the same time less provincial and less artless. It is very rare for a second book to show so remarkable an advance upon a first as "*Une Tache d'Encre*" does upon its predecessor. This is a story which may be recommended to any reader, of whatever age or sex, who wishes for a gay, good-humored and well-constructed tale, in which the whole tone and temper shall be blameless, and in which no great strain shall be put upon the intellectual attention. It is excellently carpentered; it is as neatly turned-out a piece of fiction-furniture as any one could wish to see. It has, moreover, beyond its sentimental plot, a definite subject. In "*Une Tache d'Encre*" the perennial hostility between Paris and the country town, particularly between Paris and the professional countryman, is used, with excellent effect, to hang an innocent and recurrent humor upon. Fabian Mouillard, an orphan, has been educated by an uncle, who is a family lawyer at Bourges. He has been brought up in the veneration of the office, with the fixed idea that he must eventually carry on the profession, in the same place, among the same clients; he is a sort of Dauphin of the *basoche*, and it has never been suggested to him that he can escape from being his uncle's successor. But Fabian comes up to Paris, that dangerous city, hatred and fear of which have been most carefully instilled into him. He still continues, however, to be as good as gold, when a blot of ink changes the whole current of his life. He is engaged in composing a thesis on the Junian Latins, a kind of slaves whose status in ancient Rome offers curious difficulties to the student of jurisprudence. To inform himself of history in this matter he attends the National Library, and there, one afternoon, he is so unlucky (or so lucky) as to flip

a drop of ink by accident on to a folio which is in act of being consulted by M. Flamaran, of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. M. Flamaran is a very peppery old pedant, and he is so angry that Fabian feels obliged to call upon him, at his private house, with a further apology. The fond reader will be prepared to learn that M. Flamaran, who is a widower, lives with a very charming daughter, and that she keeps house for him.

The course of true love then runs tolerably smoothly. The virtuous youth without a profession timidly woos the modest maiden without a mamma, and all would go well were it not for the fierce old solicitor at Bourges. M. Flamaran will give his daughter if Fabian will live in Paris; but the uncle will accept no niece unless the young couple will settle in the country. The eccentric violence of M. Mouillard gives the author occasion for a plentiful exercise of that conventional wit about lawyers which never fails to amuse French people, which animates the farces of the Renaissance and which finds its *locus classicus* in the one great comedy of Racine. There follows a visit to Italy, very gracefully described; then a visit to Bourges, very pathetic and proper; and, of course, the end of it all is that the uncle capitulates in snuff and tears, and comes up to Paris to end his days with Fabian and his admirable wife. A final conversation lifts the veil of the future, and we learn that the tact and household virtues of the bride are to make the whole of Fabian's career a honeymoon.

The same smoothness of execution, the same grace and adroitness of narrative, which renders "*Une Tache d'Encre*" as pleasant reading as any one of Mr. W. E. Norris's best society stories, are discovered in "*La Sarcelle Bleue*," in which, moreover, the element of humor is not absent. As a typical inter-

preter of decent French sentiment, at points where it is markedly in contrast with English habits of thought, this is an interesting and even an instructive novel. We are introduced in a country-house of Anjou, to an old officer, M. Guillaume Maldonne, and his wife, and their young daughter, Thérèse. With these excellent people lives Robert de Kérédol, an old bachelor, also a retired officer, the lifelong friend of Maldonne. The latter is an enthusiastic ornithologist, and keeper of the museum of natural history in the adjoining country-town. His ambition is to possess a complete collection of the birds of the district, and the arrival of Robert de Kérédol is due to a letter inviting him to come to Anjou and bring his gun. He has just been wounded in Africa, and the invitation is opportune. He arrives, and so prolongs his visit that he becomes a member of the household:—

Robert recovered, and was soon in a fit state to go out with his friend. And then there began for both of them the most astonishing and the most fascinating of Odysseys. Each felt something of the old life return to him; adventure, the emotion of the chase, the need to be on the alert, shots that hit or missed, distant excursions, nights beneath the stars. All private estates, princely domains, closed parks, opened their gates to these hunters of a new type. What mattered it to the proprietor most jealous of his rights if a rare woodpecker or butcher-bird was slaughtered? Welcomed everywhere, fêted everywhere, they ran from one end of the department to the other, through the copses, the meadows, the vineyards, the marshlands. Robert did not shoot; but he had an extraordinary gift for divining that a bird had passed, for discovering its traces or its nest, for saying casually: "Guillaume, I feel that there are woodcock in the thickets under that clump of birches; the mist is violet, there is an odor of dead leaves about it." Or, when the silver Spring, along the edges

of the Loire, wakens all the little world of clustered buds, he was wonderful in perceiving, motionless on a point of the shore, a ruff with bristling plumage, or even, posed between two alder catkins, the almost imperceptible blue linnet.

It follows that this novel is the romance of ornithology, and in its pleasantest pages we follow the fugitive "humeur d'oiseau." To the local collection at last but one treasure is lacking. The Blue Teal (perhaps a relative of the Blue Linnet) is known to be claimed among the avifauna of Anjou, and Maldonne and Kérédol can never come within earshot of a specimen. Such is the state of affairs when the book opens. Without perceiving the fact, the exquisite child, Thérèse Maldonne, has become a woman, and Robert de Kérédol, who thinks that his affection for her is still that of an adopted uncle, wakens to the perception that he desires her for his wife. Docile in her inexperience and in her maidenly reserve, Thérèse accustoms her mind to this idea, but at the death-bed of a village child, her protégé, she meets an ardent and virtuous young gentleman of her own age, Claude Revel, and there is love almost at first sight between them.

In France, however, and especially in the provinces, the advances of Cupid must be made with extreme decorum. Revel is not acquainted with M. Maldonne, and how is he to be introduced? He is no zoologist, but he hears of the old collector's passion for rare birds, and shooting a squirrel, he presents himself with its corpse at the Museum. He is admitted indeed, but with some scorn; and is instructed, in a high tone, that a squirrel is not a bird, nor even a rarity. He receives this information with a touching lowliness of heart, and expresses a thirst to know more. The zoologist pronounces him marvellously ignorant, indeed, but ripe for knowl-

edge, and deigns to take an interest in him. By degrees, as a rising young ornithologist, he is introduced into the family circle, where Kérédol instantly conceives a blind and rude jealousy of him. Thérèse, on the contrary, is charmed, but he gets no closer to her parents. It is explained to him at last by Thérèse that his only chance is to present himself as a suitor with a specimen of the Blue Teal in his hands. Then we follow him on cold mornings, before daybreak, in a punt on the reedy reaches of the Loire; and the gods are good to him, he pots a teal of the most cerulean blueness. Even as he brings it in, Kérédol, an incautious Iago, snatches it from him, and spoils it. But now the scales fall from everybody's eyes; Kérédol writes a long letter of farewell and disappears, while Thérèse, after some coy raptures, is ceremoniously betrothed to the enchanted Claude Revel. It is not suggested that he goes out any longer, searching for blue teal, of a cold and misty morning. "La Sarcelle Bleue" is a very charming story, only spoiled a little, as it seems to me, by the unsportsmanlike violence of Robert de Kérédol's jealousy, which is hardly in keeping with his reputation as a soldier and a gentleman.

As he has advanced in experience, M. René Bazin has shown an increasing ambition to deal with larger problems than are involved in such innocent love-intrigues as those which we have just briefly analyzed. But in doing so he has, with remarkable persistency, refrained from any realization of what are called the seamy sides of life. In "De toute son Ame" he attempted to deal with the aspects of class-feeling in a large provincial town, and in doing so was as cautious as Mrs. Gaskell or as Anthony Trollope. This story, indeed has a very curious resemblance, in its plan, to a class of novels familiar to English readers of half a century ago,

and hardly known outside England. One has a difficulty in persuading oneself that it has not been written in direct rivalry to such books as "Mary Barton" and "John Halifax, Gentleman." It is a deliberate effort to present the struggle of industrial life, and the contrasts of capital and labor in a light purely pathetic and sentimental. To readers who remember how this class of theme is usually treated in France—with so much more force and color, perhaps, but with a complete disregard of the illusions of the heart—the mere effort is interesting. In the case of "De toute son Ame" the motive is superior to the execution. M. Bazin, greatly daring, does not wholly succeed. The Latin temper is too strong for him; the absence of tradition betrays him; in this novel, ably constructed as it is, there is a certain insipid tone of sentimentality such as is common enough in English novels of the same class, but such as the best masters amongst us have avoided.

True to his strenuous provinciality, M. Bazin does not take Paris as his scene, but Nantes. That city and the lucid stretches of the vast Loire, now approaching the sea, offer subjects for a series of accurate and picturesque drop-scenes. The plot of the book itself centres in a great factory, in the *ateliers* and the *usines* of the rich firm of Lemarié, one of the most wealthy and prosperous individuals of Nantes. Here one of the artisans is Uncle Elof, a simple and honest laborer of the better class, who has made himself the guardian of his orphan nephew and niece, Antoine and Henriette Madiot. These two young people are two types—the former of the idle, sly and vicious ne'er-do-well, the latter of all that is most industrious, high-minded and decently ambitious. But Henriette is really the illegitimate daughter of the proprietor of the works, M. Lemarié, and his son Victor is attracted, he

knows not why, by a fraternal instinct, to the admirable Henriette. She is loved by a countryman, the tall and handsome Etienne, reserved and silent. The works in Nantes are burned down by the spite of Antoine, who has turned anarchist. Lemarié, the selfish capitalist, is killed by a stroke of apoplexy on hearing the news. His widow, a woman of deep religion, gives the rest of her life to good works, and is aided in her distributions by Henriette, who finds so much to do for others, in the accumulation of her labors for their welfare, that her own happiness can find no place, and the silent Etienne goes back to his country home in his barge. "De toute son Ame" is a well-constructed book, full of noble thoughts; and the sale of some twenty large editions proves that it has appealed with success to a wide public in France. But we are accustomed in England, the home of sensibility, to guard with humor and with a fear of the absurd, against being swept away on the full tide of sentiment, and perhaps this sort of subject is better treated by a Teutonic than by a Latin mind. At all events, "De toute son Ame," the most English of M. Bazin's novels, is likely to be the one least appreciated in England.

A very characteristic specimen of M. Bazin's deliberate rejection of all the conventional spices with which the French love to heighten the flavor of their fiction, is found in the novel called "Madame Corentine," a sort of hymn to the glory of devoted and unruffled matrimony. This tale opens in the island of Jersey, where Madame Corentine L'Héréc is discovered keeping a bric-à-brac shop in St. Heliers, in company with her thirteen-year-old daughter, Simone. Mme. L'Héréc is living separated from her husband, but M. Bazin would not be true to his *parti pris* if he even suggested that there had been any impropriety of

moral conduct on either side. On the contrary, husband and wife are excellent alike, only, unhappily, there has been a fatal incompatibility of temper, exacerbated by the husband's vixen mother. Corentine was a charming girl of Perros in Brittany; M. Héréc, a citizen of the neighboring town of Lannion. Now he remains in Lannion, and she has taken refuge in Jersey; no communication passes between them. But the child Simone longs to see her father, and she sends him a written word by a Breton sailor. Old Capt. Guen, Corentine's widowed father, writes to beg her to come to Perros, where her younger sister, Marie Anne, has married the skipper of a fishing vessel. Pressed by Simone, the mother consents to go, although dreading the approach to her husband. She arrives to find her sister's husband, Sullian, drowned at sea, and the father mourns over two daughters, one of whom is a widow and the other separated from her man. But Sullian comes back to life, and through the instrumentality of little Simone, the Hérécs are brought together, even the wicked old mother-in-law getting her fangs successively drawn. The curtain falls on a scene of perfect happiness, a general "Bless ye, my children" of melodrama.

There is a great deal of charming description in this book, both the Jersey and the Lannion and the Perros scenes being painted in delightful colors. A great part of the novel is occupied with the pathos of the harvest of the sea, the agony of Breton women who lose their husbands, brothers and sons in the fisheries. Here M. Bazin comes into direct competition with a greater magician, with M. Pierre Loti in his exquisite and famous "Pêcheurs d'Islande." This is a comparison which is inevitably made, and it is one which the younger novelist, with all his merits, is not strong enough to sustain. On the other hand the central subject

of the novel, the development of character in the frivolous and tactless but essentially good-hearted Corentine, is very good, and Simone is one of the best of M. Bazin's favorite "girlish shapes that slip the bud in lines of unspilled symmetry." It is not possible for me to dwell here on "*Les Noëlle*," a long novel about provincial society in the Angevine district of the Vendée, nor on "*Humble Amour*," a series of six short stories, all (except "*Les Trois Pelnes d'un Rossignol*," a fantastic dream of Naples) dealing with Breton life, because I must push on to a consideration of a much more important work.

The most successful, and I think the best, of M. René Bazin's books, is the latest. When "*La Terre qui Meurt*" was published in 1890, there were not a few critics who said that here at last was a really great novel. There is no doubt that here the novelist has found a subject worthy of the highest talent. That subject briefly is the draining of the village by the city. He takes, in "*La Terre qui Meurt*," the agricultural class, and shows how the towns, with their offices, cafés, railway stations and shops, are tempting it away from the farms, and how, under the pressure of imported produce, the land itself, the ancient free prerogative of France, the inalienable and faithful soil, is dying of a slow disease. To illustrate this heroic and melancholy theme, M. Bazin takes the history of a farm in that flat district occupying the northwest of the department of the Vendée, between the sandy shore of the Atlantic and the low hills of the Bocage, which is called *Le Marais*. This is a curious fragment of France, traversed by canals, a little Holland in its endless horizons, broken up by marshes and pools, burned hard in summer, floated over by icy fogs in winter, a country which, from time immemorial, has been proud of its great farms, and where the traditions

of the soil have been more conservative than anywhere else. Of this tract of land, the famous *Marais Vendéen*, with its occasional hill-town looking out from a chalky island over a wild sea of corn and vines and dwarf orchards to the veritable ocean far away in the west, M. Bazin gives an enchanting picture. It may be amusing to note that his landscape is as exact as a guide-book, and that *Sallertaine*, *Challans*, *St. Gilles*, and the rest are all real places. If the reader should ever take the sea-baths at *Sables d'Olonne*, he may drive northward and visit for himself "*la terre qui meurt*" in all its melancholy beauty.

The scene of the novel is an ancient farm, called *La Fromentière* (even this, by the way, is almost a real name, since it is the channel of *Fromentine* which divides all this rich marsh-land from the populous island of *Noirmoutiers*). This farmstead and the fields around it have belonged from time immemorial to the family of *Lumineau*. Close by there is a château, which has always been in the possession of one noble family, that of the *Marquis de la Fromentière*. The aristocrats at the castle have preserved a sort of feudal relation to the farmers, as they to the laborers, the democratization of society in France having but faintly extended to these outlying provinces. But hard times have come. All these people live on the land and the land can no longer support them. The land cannot adapt itself to new methods, new traditions; it is the most unaltering thing in the world, and when pressure comes from without and from within, demanding new ideas, exciting new ambitions, the land can neither resist nor change, it can only die.

Consequently, when "*La Terre qui Meurt*" opens, the *Marquis* and his family have long ceased to inhabit their château. They have passed away to Paris, out of sight of the peasants who

respected and loved them, leaving the park untended and the house empty. Toussaint Lumineau, the farmer who owns La Fromentière, is a splendid specimen of the old heroic type of French farmer, a man patriarchal in appearance, having in his blood, scarcely altered by the passage of time, the prejudices, the faiths and the persistencies of his ancient race. No one of his progenitors has ever dreamed of leaving the land. The sons have cultivated it by the side of the fathers; the daughters have married into the families of neighboring farms, and have borne sons and daughters for the eternal service of the soil. The land was strong enough and rich enough; it could support them all. But now the virtue has passed out of the land. It is being killed by trains from Russia and by ships from America. The phylloxera has smitten its vineyards, the shifting of markets has disturbed the easy distribution of its products. And the land never adapts itself to circumstances, never takes a new lease of life, never "turns over a new leaf." If you trifle with its ancient immutable conditions, there is but one thing that the land can do—it can die.

The whole of "*La Terre qui Meurt*" shows how, without violence or agony, this sad condition proceeds at La Fromentière. Within the memory of Toussaint Lumineau the farm has been prosperous and wealthy. With a wife of the old, capable class, with three strong sons and two wholesome daughters, all went well in the household. But, gradually, one by one, the props are removed, and the roof of his house rests more and more heavily on the old man's own obstinate persistence. What will happen when that too is removed? For the eldest son, a Hercules, has been lamed for life by a wagon which passed over his legs; the second son and the eldest daughter, bored to extinction by the farm life, steal away,

the one to a wretched post at a railway station, the other to be a servant in a small restaurant, both infinitely preferring the mean life in a country town to the splendid solitude of the ancestral homestead. Toussaint is left with his third son, André, a first-rate farmer, and with his younger daughter, Rousille. In each of these the genuine love of the soil survives.

But André has been a soldier in Africa, and has tasted of the sweetness of the world. He pines for society and a richer earth, more sunlight and a wider chance; and, at length, with a breaking heart, not daring to confide in his proud old father, he, too, steals away, not to abandon the tillage of the earth, but to practice it on a far broader scale in the fertile plains of the Argentine. The eldest son, the cripple, dies, and the old Toussaint is left, abandoned by all save his younger daughter, in whom the heroic virtue of the soil revives, and who becomes mistress of the farm and the hope of the future. And happiness comes to her, for Jean Nesmy, the laborer from the Bocage, whom her father has despised, but whom she has always loved, contrives to marry Rousille at the end of the story. But the Marquis is by this time completely ruined, and the estates are presently to be sold. The farms which have been in his family for centuries, will pass into other hands. What will be the result of this upon the life at La Fromentière? That remains to be seen; that will be experienced with all else that an economic revolution brings in its wake, by the children of Rousille.

A field in which M. René Bazin has been fertile almost from the first has been the publication in the *Débats*, and afterwards in book-form, of short, picturesque studies of foreign landscape, manners and accomplishment. He began with "*A l'Aventure*," a volume of sketches of modern Italian life, which he expanded a few years later

in "Les Italiens d'Aujourd'hui." Perhaps the best of all these volumes is that called "Sicile," a record of a tour along the shores of the Mediterranean, to Malta, through the length and breadth of Sicily, northward along Calabria and so to Naples. In no book of M. Bazin's are his lucid, cheerful philosophy and his power of eager observation more eminently illustrated than in "Sicile." A tour which he made in Spain during the months of September and October, 1894, was recorded in a volume entitled "Terre d'Espagne." Of late he has expended the same qualities of sight and style on the country parts of France, the western portion of which he knows with the closest intimacy. He has collected these impressions—sketches, short tales, imaginary conversations—in two volumes, "En Province," 1896, and "Croquis de France," 1899. In 1898 he accompanied, or rather pursued, the Emperor of Germany on his famous journey to Jerusalem, and we have the result in "Croquis d'Orient." In short, M. Bazin, who has undertaken all these excursions in the interests of the great newspaper with which he is identified, is at the present moment one of the most active literary travellers in France, and his records have exactly the same discreet, safe and conciliatory qualities which mark his novels. Wherever M. Bazin is, and whatever he writes, he is always eminently *sage*.

We return to the point from which we started. Whatever honors the future may have in store for the author of "La Terre qui Meurt," it is not to be believed that he will ever develop into an author dangerous to morals. His stories and sketches might have been

read, had chronology permitted, by Mrs. Barbauld to Miss Hannah More. Mrs. Chapone, so difficult to satisfy, would have rejoiced to see them in the hands of those cloistered virgins, her long-suffering daughters. And there is not, to my knowledge, one other contemporary French author of the imagination who could endure that stringent test. M. Bazin's novels appeal to persons of a distinctly valetudinarian moral digestion. With all this they are not dull, or tiresome, or priggish. They preach no sermon except a broad and wholesome amiability; they are possessed by no provoking propaganda of virtue. Simply M. Bazin sees the beauty of domestic life in France, is fascinated by the charm of the national gaiety and courtesy, and does not attempt to look below the surface.

There is something to praise, as well as perhaps something to smile at, in this chaste and surprising optimism. In a very old-fashioned book, that nobody reads now, Alfred de Musset's "Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle," there is a phrase which curiously prefigures the ordinary French novelists of to-day. "Voyez," says the hero of that work, "voyez comme ils parlent de tout; toujours les termes les plus crus, les plus grossiers, les plus abjects; ceux-là seulement leur paraissent *vrais*; toute le reste n'est que parade, convention et préjugés. Qu'ils racontent une anecdote, qu'ils rendent compte de ce qu'ils ont éprouvé—toujours le mot sale et physique, toujours la lettre, toujours la mort." What an exact prediction; and it is to the honor of M. Bazin that all the faults of judgment and proportion which are here so vigorously stigmatized are avoided by his pure and comfortable talent.

Edmund Gosse.

THE WARDEN OF THE MARCHES.

BY SYDNEY C. GRIER.

XVI.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

"Sahib, there is a man under the wall on the east side."

"How did he come there?" demanded Colonel Graham angrily. "What are the sentries thinking of?"

"The night is so dark, sahib, that he crept up unnoticed. He is the holy mullah Aziz-ud-Din, and desires speech with your honor."

"The Amir's mullah? You are sure of it?"

"I know his voice, sahib. He is holding his hands on high, to show that he has no weapons."

"I suppose we may as well see what he has to say," said the Colonel to Mr. Burgrave, with whom he had been making final arrangements, and the two men climbed the stairs to the eastern rampart. Once there, and looking over into the darkness, it was some little time before their eyes could distinguish the dim figure at the foot of the wall.

"Peace!" said Colonel Graham.

"It is peace, sahib. I bear the words of the Amir Ashraf Ali Khan. He says, 'It is now beyond my power to save the lives of the sahibs, and I will not deceive them, knowing that a warrior's death among the ruins of their fortress will please them better than to fall into the hands of my thrice-acursed nephew, who has stolen the hearts of my soldiers from me. But this I can do. The houses next to the canal on this side are held by my own body-guard, faithful men, who have sworn great oaths to me, and I have there six swift camels hidden. Let

the Memsahibs be intrusted to me, especially those of the household of my beloved friend Nath Sahib, and I will send them at once to Nalapur, where they shall be in sanctuary in my own palace, and I will swear—I who kept my covenant with the Sarkar until the Sarkar broke it—that death shall befall me before any danger touches them.'"

"Why is this message sent to-night?" asked Colonel Graham.

"Because Bahram Khan is preparing a great destruction, sahib, and the heart of Ashraf Ali Khan bleeds to think that the houses of his friends Sinjaj Killin and Nath Sahib should both be blotted out in one day."

"Carry my thanks and those of the Commissioner Sahib to Ashraf Ali Khan, but tell him that the Memsahibs will remain with us. Their presence would only place him in greater danger, and he would not be able to protect them. But we can. They will not fall into the hands of Bahram Khan."

"It is well, sahib." The faint blotch which represented the messenger melted into the surrounding darkness, and Colonel Graham turned to his companion.

"It will be your business to see after that, if the enemy break in. Haycraft comes with me. We must leave Flora in your charge. Don't let her any more than Miss North fall into their hands."

"I promise," said Mr. Burgrave, and their hands met in the darkness.

"Thanks! I think we have settled everything now. We don't start for an hour yet, and if you like to explain things to Miss North—"

"I should prefer to say nothing unless the necessity arises."

"I never thought of your going into details, but she must know something, surely? Flora will learn the state of affairs from Haycraft, Mrs. North will pick it up from the Hardys and her ayah, and Miss North will probably expect—But please yourself, of course."

"I will go and talk to her for a little while. I have scarcely seen her all day."

Mr. Burgrave's tone was constrained. It appeared to him almost impossible to meet Mabel at this crisis and abstain from any allusion to the terrible duty which had just been laid upon him. He was not an imaginative man, and no forecast of the scene burned itself into his brain, as would have been the case with some, but the oppression of anticipation was heavy upon him. For him the dull horror in his mind overshadowed everything, and it was with a shock that he found Mabel in one of her most vivacious and aggressive moods. She was walking up and down the veranda outside her room as if for a wager, turning at each end of the course with a swish of draperies which sounded like an angry breeze, and she hailed his arrival with something like enthusiasm, simply because he was some one to talk to.

"Flora is crying on Fred's—I mean Mr. Haycraft's—shoulder somewhere," she said, "and Mrs. Hardy and Georgia are having a prayer-meeting with the native Christians. They wanted me to come too, but I don't feel as if I could be quiet—and I shouldn't understand, either. What is going to happen, really?"

"The Colonel proposes to make a sortie and capture the enemy's guns. There is, I trust, every prospect of his succeeding."

Mabel stamped her foot. "Why can't you tell me the truth, instead of trying to sugar things over?" she demanded.

"It would be much more interesting."

"You must allow me to decide what it is suitable you should hear," said Mr. Burgrave, his mind still so full of that final duty of his that he spoke with a serene indifference which Mabel found most galling.

"I don't allow you to do anything of the sort. I wish you wouldn't treat me as if I was a baby. It's like telling me yesterday that all the fresh milk in the place was to be reserved for us women and the wounded, as if I wanted to be pilloried as a lazy, selfish creature, doing nothing and demanding luxuries!"

"My dear little girl, I am sure there isn't a man in the garrison who would consent to your missing any comfort that the place can furnish."

"That's just it. I want to feel the pinch—to share the hardships. But of course you don't understand—you never do." She stopped and looked at him. "I don't know how it is, Eustace, but you seem somehow to stir up everything that is bad in my nature. I could die happy if I had once shocked you thoroughly."

He recoiled from her involuntarily. "Do you think it is a time to joke about death when it may be close upon you?" he asked, with some severity.

"That sounds as if you were a little shocked," said Mabel meditatively. "But you know, Eustace, whenever you tell me to do anything—I mean when you express a wish that I should do anything—I feel immediately the strongest possible impulse to do exactly the opposite."

"But the impulse has never yet been translated into action?" he asked, with the indulgent smile which was reserved for Mabel when she talked extravagantly.

"I'm ashamed to say it hasn't."

"Then I am quite satisfied. I can scarcely aspire to regulate your

thoughts at present, can I? But so long as you respect my wishes—"

"Oh, what a lot of trouble it would save if we were all comfortably killed to-night!" cried Mabel, with a sudden change of mood. Mr. Burgrave was shocked and showed it. "I'm in earnest, Eustace."

"My dear child, you can hardly expect me to believe that you would welcome the horrors which the storming of this place would entail?"

"Oh, no; of course not. You are so horribly literal. Can't you see that my nerves are all on edge? I wish you understood things. If you won't talk about what's going to be done to-night, do go away, and don't stay here and be mysterious."

"Dear child, do you think I shall judge you hardly for this feminine weakness? You need not be afraid of hurting or shocking me. Say anything you like; I shall put it down to the true cause. If your varying moods have taught me nothing else, at least I have learnt since our engagement to take your words at their proper valuation."

"If you pile many more loads of obligation upon me, I shall expire!" said Mabel sharply, only to receive a kind smile in return. Anything more that she might have said, in the amiable design of shocking him beyond forgiveness, was prevented by the appearance of Mrs. Hardy.

"Is it true that you are going to arm all the civilians in the place, Mr. Burgrave?" she demanded of the Commissioner.

"It is thought well—merely as a precautionary measure."

"Then I do beg and beseech you to give Mr. Hardy a rifle that won't go off, or we shall all be shot."

"We will get the Padri to go round and hand out fresh cartridges," said Mr. Burgrave seriously, but Mabel burst into a peal of hysterical laughter, which was effectual in putting a stop

to all further conversation, and he returned to the outer courtyard where the force composing the forlorn hope was mustering in readiness for the start. Fitz and Winlock and their small party had left already, officers and men alike wearing the native grass sandals instead of boots, as they had been accustomed to do in their hunting expeditions, and it was known that they had scrambled along the wall and round the base of the southwestern tower in safety. The ferry had by this time been duly constructed by Runcorn and his assistants, one of whom had undertaken the very unpleasant duty of swimming across the ice-cold canal to pass the first wire rope round one of the posts which registered the height of the water on the opposite bank. Ball ammunition in extra quantities was served out to all, for although Colonel Graham hoped to confine himself entirely to cold steel, for the sake of quietness, he meant to be able to reply to the enemy's fire, should their attention unfortunately be aroused. The men were marched down in parties to the water-gate, and ferried over as quickly as the confined space would allow, after which the raft was drawn back to the gateway, and the wire disconnected. It had been decided that this was necessary, lest the enemy should take advantage of the ferry to cross the canal while the attention of the garrison was occupied by an attack in front. If Colonel Graham and his force returned victorious, it would be easy to carry the wire across again by throwing a rope to them from the rampart, while if they were compelled to retreat, the raft was so small that to use it under fire would entail a useless sacrifice of life, and the fugitives would do better to swim.

Then began a weary waiting-time for those in the fort. The night was almost moonless, so that it was impos-

sible to distinguish any movement, whether on the part of friend or of foe. At last a rocket rising from the cliff which overhung the town on the northwest, and which Fitz and Winlock had indicated as their goal, showed that they at least had so far been successful. The rocket sent up from the fort in reply was answered by another from the cliff, and this was immediately followed by the distant sound of brisk firing, which seemed to cause considerable perturbation in the parts of the town occupied by the enemy. Lights moved about hurriedly from place to place, horns were blown, and there was a confused noise of angry shouting. The garrison did their best by opening fire from the wall and towers, to increase the effect of the surprise, aiming, necessarily, somewhat at random, for the moving lights did not afford very satisfactory targets. In reply a dropping fire broke out, which was maintained for some time with but little spirit, and slackened gradually. Scarcely had Mr. Burgrave given the order to cease fire, however, when a heavy fusillade was heard on the west of the fort, though not from the hill. The sound appeared to come from the point at which the bridge, now ruined, had crossed the canal, a point which the enemy had not hitherto been known to occupy, and which Colonel Graham had not intended to approach. His force should have been far to the left of it by this time, and already mounting the hill. The most probable explanation seemed to be that they had missed their way in the darkness, and following the canal too far, had fallen into an ambuscade posted at the ruins of the bridge to guard against any attempt to cross for the purpose of capturing the guns. The Commissioner and his garrison waited and listened in the deepest anxiety, straining their eyes to try and perceive, from the flashes of the rifles,

which way the fight was tending. But the firing ceased suddenly, and about the same time that on the farther side of the enemy's position ceased also. There was nothing to do but wait.

Suddenly a piteous wailing arose at the rear of the fort, from the opposite bank of the canal. A native stood there, one of the water-carriers who had accompanied the force, abjectly entreating to be fetched over, since the enemy were at his heels. To employ the ferry at such a moment was not to be thought of, but a rope was thrown from the steps of the water-gate, and the miserable wretch, plunging in, caught it, and was drawn across. He told a terrible tale as he stood dripping and shivering in the passage leading to the gate. Colonel Graham's force had been attacked, shortly after leaving the canal bank, by overwhelming numbers of the enemy, who had first poured in a withering fire, and then rushed forward to complete the destruction with their knives and tulwars. The *bhisti* himself was the only man who had escaped, and the enemy had pursued him to the very edge of the canal. The sharpest-sighted men in the fort, sent to the rampart to test the truth of this statement, were able to confirm it. There was undoubtedly a large body of the enemy on the other side of the canal. They were lying down behind the high bank, in order to be sheltered from the fire of the garrison.

"To cut off fugitives, I suppose," muttered Mr. Burgrave, half to himself and half to Ressaldar Ghulam Rasul. "That looks as though the massacre were not quite so complete as—Hark! I thought I heard a sound from the hill. Can our glorious fellows have made a last dash for it after all—some few who escaped?"

The men on the rampart stood like statues to listen, but failed to distinguish anything that might confirm the

Commissioner's surmise. The air seemed full of sound—footfalls, a murmur from the town, a stray shot or two from the same direction, and on the west a kind of shuffling noise. The enemy were taking up their positions for the attack. Mr. Burgrave sent orders to the guard at the water-gate to let the air out of the inflated skins which supported the raft, so as to sink it to the level of the water, and this was at once done. When he had posted a sentry in the passage and another on the rampart, he was able to leave that side of the fort to defend itself, since the enemy had no means of crossing to assail it. To occupy the whole range of wall with the absurdly small force at his disposal was obviously impossible, and he therefore placed ten men at each of the larger towers, from which with a certain amount of difficulty and risk, a flanking fire could be obtained, and twelve in the two gateway turrets, retaining the Resaldar and sixteen men as a reserve, ready to make a dash for any point that might be specially threatened. If the garrison should be driven from the walls, those who escaped were to make for the hospital, whither the women and children would be sent, and where the last stand was to take place. Having made his dispositions the Commissioner went the round of the towers to encourage the men. His own Sikhs he could deal with well enough, but he felt that it was the irony of fate which obliged him to urge the sowars of the Khemistan Horse to be worthy of their first commander, General Keeling, and it seemed as if the same thought had occurred to the men, for they scowled at him resentfully when they heard the mighty name from his lips.

The bad news brought by the fugitive spread through the fort with astonishing rapidity. The native women, whom Georgia had succeeded in sooth-

ing into some sort of calmness before the departure of the force filled the air with their wallings, until Ismail Bakhsh, who was head of the civilian guard detailed for the defence of the hospital, threatened to fire a volley among them if they were not quiet. Flora Graham's ayah was gossiping with a friend among these women when the news arrived, and she rushed with it at once to her mistress's room. Poor Flora had shut herself up alone to pray for the safety of her father and lover, and was following in thought every step of their perilous journey. She had just reached with them the summit of the hill, and rushed upon the guard round the guns, when the ayah burst in with the news that the worst had happened. The suddenness of the disaster was too much for Flora. Her usual self-control deserted her, and she ran wildly across the courtyard to Georgia's room. Georgia was lying down, talking softly in the dark to Mabel, who sat beside her, and both sprang up at Flora's entrance.

"What is it? Have they come back?" they demanded, with one voice.

"No, no, they are killed—all killed! Papa and Fred both—oh, Mrs. North, what can I do?" She dropped sobbing on the floor at Georgia's feet and buried her face in her dress.

"Perhaps it isn't true," said Georgia faintly. She had sunk down again on the bed.

"There's no hope—one man has come back, the only survivor. Both of them at once; and I was praying for them, and I felt so sure—and even while I was praying they were being killed."

"Is the whole force cut off?" asked Georgia, almost in a whisper.

"All but this one man." Flora checked her sobs for a moment.

"Mr. Anstruther, too?" cried Mabel sharply.

"All, I tell you! It doesn't signify to you, Mab; you have your Eustace left,

but I have lost everything. Oh, Mrs. North, you know how it feels. Help me to bear it!"

"Flora dear," began Georgia with difficulty. "I—I can't breathe," she gasped, struggling to stand up. "Please ask Mrs. Hardy to come. I feel so faint. She will understand."

Rabah who had been crouched in the corner as usual, sprang up, and returned in a moment with Mrs. Hardy, who fell upon both girls immediately and drove them out with bitter reproaches.

"You pair of selfish, thoughtless chatterboxes! I should have thought you had more sense, Flora. Just be off, both of you. You can have my rooms for the rest of the night; I shall stay here. Even if all our poor fellows are killed, was that any reason for killing Mrs. North, too?"

"Oh, please don't, Mrs. Hardy! I never thought—Mrs. North is always so kind, and I am so miserable," sobbed Flora.

"You shouldn't be miserable unless you're certain it's absolutely necessary. You wouldn't believe a native if he told you he was dead, so why should you when he says other people are dead?" demanded Mrs. Hardy with a brilliancy of logic which somehow failed to satisfy. "I haven't a doubt that the *bhisti* took to his heels in a panic at the sound of the first shot, and if he hadn't fortunately been in the rear, the panic might have spread to all the rest. There, go away, do, and don't cry so. We'll hope all will go well."

"Why have you left your post, doctor?" asked Mr. Burgrave, meeting Dr. Tighe crossing the courtyard.

"The hospital will have to look after itself a good deal to-night, but I have left the Padri and my Babu in charge there. Mrs. North is taken ill."

"Good Heavens! It only needed this

to make the horror of the situation complete."

"From our point of view it may be the best thing that could happen. It will make the men fight like demons. Here, you girl, where are you going?" He had caught the shoulders of a veiled woman, who ran up and tried to slip past him into the passage, but she let her *chadar* fall aside and disclosed herself as Rahah.

"I have been telling the men of the regiment, sahib, and they have all sworn great oaths, that so long as one of them has a spark of life left Sinjaj Kilin's daughter shall not be without a protector in her need, and that the corpses of friends within and foes without shall be piled as high as the ramparts before the enemy shall gain a footing on the wall. I told also those in the hospital"—there was a hint of malice in Rahah's voice—"and every wounded man that can sit up in bed is demanding a gun. They will serve as hospital guard, they say, and set Ismail Bakhsh and his men free to help on the walls."

"Good idea that," said Dr. Tighe, turning to the Commissioner. "You see how the men take it. Well, I shall keep Mrs. North in her own quarters if I can, but there is a passage through to the hospital courtyard, and we must carry her over if it's necessary. But I don't think it will be now."

Mr. Burgrave nodded, and returned to his station on the western curtain. Why the enemy did not advance to the attack was a mystery. In the opinion of Ghulam Rasul and his most experienced subordinates, they had moved out from their quarters in the town, and were occupying the irrigated land on both sides of the canal in large numbers, sheltered against any volley from the walls by the groves of trees which marked the lines of the watercourses. They could not be seen, nor could it precisely be said that they were heard,

but, as the old soldiers in the garrison said, they felt that they were there. The situation was eerie in the extreme, and Mr. Burgrave was unable to find comfort in a phenomenon which made his men cheerful in a moment. It was the Ressaldar who called his attention to it as they stood straining their ears in the attempt to distinguish some definite sound in the murmuring silence, and at once he himself heard clearly, the faint tread of a galloping horse far away to the northeast.

"He rides!" breathed Ghulam Rasul in an ecstasy, and "He rides!" cried the sower nearest him, catching up the words from his lips. "He rides!" went from man to man, until the defenders of the towers looked at one another with glistening eyes, and even the unsympathetic Sikhs, who held themselves loftily aloof from the contemptible local superstitions of their Khemi comrades, repeated with something of enthusiasm, "He rides!" "He rides; all is well," said Ismail Bakhsh, puffing out his chest with pride, in his temporary guard-room on the Club-house veranda. "Sinjaj Kilin Sahib is watching over his house and over his children. The power of the Sarkar stands firm."

All unconscious of the moral reinforcement which was doubling the strength of the garrison, Mabel and Flora sat disconsolately over the charcoal brazier in Mrs. Hardy's room, listening for the sounds of the attack, which they expected each moment to begin.

Mrs. Hardy's vigorous rebuke had nerved them both to put a brave face on matters, and for some time they vied with one another in discovering reasons for refusing credit to the report of the fugitive, and determining that all might yet be well. But as time went on and there was no sign of the triumphal return of Colonel Graham and his force, their vallant efforts at

cheerfulness flagged perceptibly. Mrs. Hardy, hurrying across to say that Georgia was doing pretty well, advised them to lie down and try to sleep, but they scouted the idea with indignation, and still sat looking gloomily into the glowing embers and listening to the wind, which wailed round the crazy old buildings in a peculiarly mournful manner.

"Doesn't it seem absurdly incongruous," said Mabel at last, in a low voice, "that you and I—two *fin de siècle* High School girls, who have taken up all the modern fads just like other people—should be sitting here expecting every moment that a band of savages will break in and kill us—with swords? It feels so unnatural—so horribly out of drawing."

"How can you talk such nonsense?" snapped Flora, upon whose nerves the strain of suspense was telling severely. "I never heard that a High School career protected people against a violent death. Do you think it felt natural to the women in the Mutiny to be killed—or the French Revolution, or any time like that?"

"I don't know. It really seems as if they must have been more accustomed to horrors in those days. Just imagine, Flora, the little paragraph there will be in the South Central Magazine: 'We regret to record the death of Miss Mabel North, O.S.C., who was murdered in the late rising on the Indian frontier. Miss Flora Graham, a distinguished student of St. Scipio's College, St. Margarets, N.B., is believed to have perished on the same sad occasion.' Your school paper will have just the same sort of thing in it, and the two editors will send each other complimentary copies, and acknowledge the courtesy in the next number. It will all be about you and me—and we shall be dead."

"Of course we shall; you said that before. But I don't see what good it

does to die many times before our deaths."

"How horrid of you to call me a coward!" said Mabel pensively.

"I don't call you anything of the sort. I think you must be fearfully brave to look at things in this detached, artistic kind of way, but what's the good of it? Death must come when it will come, but naturally, no one could be expected to look forward with pleasure to the mere fact of dying. Unless, of course"—Flora's blue eyes shone as she turned suddenly from the general to the particular—"my dying would save papa or Fred. Then I should be glad to die."

"Do you really mean that you wouldn't mind being killed if somehow it would save either of their lives?"

"Of course I do, just as you would gladly die to save your Eustace."

"But I wouldn't!" cried Mabel involuntarily, then tried to minimize the effect of her admission by turning it into a joke. "I think it's his privilege to do that for me."

"I wish you wouldn't say that sort of thing!" said Flora reproachfully. "Happily, there's no one else to hear it, but if I didn't know you, I should think you were perfectly horrid."

"No, Flora, really," cried Mabel in a burst of honesty. "I can't say confidently that there is one person in the world that I would die for. I feel as if I could die to save Georgia, but I don't know whether I could do it when the time came. I used to think that people—English people, at any rate—became heroic just as a matter of course when danger happened, but now I begin to believe that it depends a good deal on what they have been like before."

"You always try to make the worst of yourself."

"No, I don't. I'm trying to look at myself as I really am. I have never in my life done a thing I didn't like if

I could help it. What sort of preparation is that for being heroic? Flora," with a sudden change of subject, "suppose the enemy had stormed the fort before this evening, would you have asked your father or Fred to kill you?"

"No," was the unexpected reply. "It would have been so awfully hard for them. I keep a revolver in this pocket of my coat. You just put it to your eye—and it's done."

"Oh, I wish I was like you! I know I should be wondering and worrying whether it was right, and all that sort of thing, until it was too late to do it."

"I don't care whether it would be right or not," said Flora doggedly. "I should do it. Do you think I would make things worse for papa and Fred?"

"I suppose Eustace would do it for me," drearily. "He would if he thought it was the proper thing. He always does the proper thing."

"I wish you wouldn't talk in that horrid voice. It makes me feel creepy. And I don't think it's fair to say that sort of thing about the Commissioner. He's perfectly devoted to you, and you know it would break his heart to have to do—what we were talking about. I don't believe you're half as fond of him as he is of you."

"Have you found that out now for the first time?"

"Then it's a shame!" cried Flora. "Why do you let him think you care for him? He worships you, and you pretend—"

"I don't pretend. He took it into his head that I cared for him, and wouldn't let me say I didn't. And he doesn't worship me. He thinks that I shall make a nice, adoring sort of worshipper for him when he has got me well in hand."

"Well, I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" said Flora crushingly.

"You needn't be horrid. I'm sure I have quite enough to bear as it is. What with thinking every morning when I wake that I shall have to be pleasant to him whenever he chooses to come and talk to me all day, when I should like to be at the other end of the world—"

"What do you mean to do when you are married?"

Mabel shivered. "I don't know," she said. "I rather hope we shall be killed instead."

"You can't expect to get out of difficulties in that way. If you want to be killed, you are quite sure not to be. And to go on living a lie—"

"Don't!" entreated Mabel. "Which ever way you look at it, it's dreadful. I don't know what to do. What's that? I'm sure I heard a step."

It must have been Mr. Burgrave's evil genius which prompted him to present himself at this particular time. The enemy had made no movement, and the Commissioner thought he might safely leave the wall for a moment, in order to obtain a sight of Mabel, and inquire after Georgia. He entered the room with a creditable assumption of cheerfulness, which the girls did not even observe.

"How are we getting on?" asked Mabel hastily.

"Oh, well, we must hope for the best," was the unsatisfying answer. In his own mind, Mr. Burgrave had no doubt that the enemy were only waiting for dawn to make their attack, advancing on the fort at the same moment that their guns opened fire from the hill.

"No news yet of our forlorn hope?" asked Flora.

"No news," he answered, then hesitated with his hand on the door, and looked at Mabel. She rose, as if in response to his glance, and went out on the veranda with him.

"Poor little girl!" he said, putting his

arm around her. "This waiting-time is very hard upon you, isn't it? God knows I would give you comfort if I could, but I dare not raise false hopes."

Mabel freed herself from his clasp. In the dim light cast by the brazier through the small window, he could see that she was very pale, and that her eyes looked unnaturally large and dark in the whiteness of her face. "I want you to take this back, please," she said, holding out her engagement-ring. "I can't die with a lie upon my soul."

"A lie!" he exclaimed in bewilderment.

"I don't love you. Sometimes I think I almost hate you," she replied, in a low monotonous voice.

His natural impulse was to take her in his arms and crush this latest attempt at rebellion by sheer weight of mingled authority and affection, as he had done more than once before, but the words died upon his lips as he looked into her face, and he stood irresolute. This was not coquetry, not the wild talk for which he had smiled at her that very evening, but sober earnest.

"Am I to take this as your own unbiased wish, Mabel?" he asked slowly, seeing his world falling in ruins around him as he spoke.

"Absolutely," she answered.

He took the ring from her hand. "It is the kind of encouragement that is calculated to nerve a man for the fight, isn't it?" he asked. "But perhaps some bullet will be more merciful than you are."

He slipped the ring on his little finger, and taking up his crutch, left her without another word. When he returned to the rampart it struck him, preoccupied though he was, that the night was not quite so dark as before. Dawn was approaching, and there was a perceptible unrest in the direction of the plane-trees behind which the ene-

my were posted. As he stood looking round, Ghulam Rasul approached him from the northern curtain.

"There is a large body of the enemy advancing towards the gate, sahib," he said. "They come from the town, and are marching in perfect silence."

"Then they mean to attack us on two sides at once," said the Commissioner. "Tell the men in the turrets to reserve their fire until they are close up, Res-

The Argosy.

saldar. We can't afford to throw away a shot. Are the reserve all under arms?"

"All ready, sahib. Your honor can now hear the enemy's approach."

They stood waiting and listening. And in that hour of awful expectancy, when armed men were advancing from all sides upon the sorely tried fort, Georgia's boy was born.

(To be continued.)

THE LONDON FACTORY GIRL.

At first sight she may not exactly attract you. If you happen to walk along the Euston road, Tottenham Court Road, or any of the other factory districts of London, at her dinner hour, or when her work for the day is done, you will see her pouring out of the adjacent factories by the dozen or the score. She wears a soiled white apron, and, presumably, a velvet hat with feathers. Her fringe almost covers her eyes. Her voice carries far, and occasionally carries what you had rather not hear. Her laughter makes itself heard above all the roar of the traffic. She may level a jest at you in passing, should you be unknown to her, and should she feel so inclined. She indulges in loud chaff with the conductors of omnibuses and the drivers of hansoms, and possibly exchanges playful thumps with a passing young man—an acquaintance, it may be, or a total stranger.

It is possible that you may shrink aside from her and her tribe as though they were hostile Indians on the war-path. You may stand almost aghast, and watch the many white aprons and shabby plush or velvet hats of red or green or blue, adding a fresh note of color to the stream of traffic surging ceaselessly

along the busy street, just as you may have stood by a river and watched a stream of gaudy dye from some works higher up, or the discolored water of some swollen mountain burn altering the river's original hue. And even as the color from the dye-works or the muddy burn stains the river, so does the factory girl, by her existence, help to influence the color of that great stream of human life that began with Time and rolls on to Eternity.

She is a very big factor in society. She is a serious partner in the labors of the world. She is one of the problems that our political economists and social reformers grow gray and worn over. So large and important a part has she played in society during the nineteenth century that the cultivation of her acquaintance by those who know her not, seems, if not a pleasure, certainly a duty.

It was not until the eighteenth century, when machinery had been given to the world by Arkwright and others, that women took their place in the industrial world, side by side with men, and became their formidable competitors.

The influence of machinery upon la-

bor was enormous. On female labor it was almost incalculable. Trades became more easy to learn. Skilled labor was no longer the only sort of labor for which there was any great demand, and mechanical labor required less thought than the labor which one's hands and brains had to carry out together. Till then, as often as not, an entire process was carried out in all its details by one person. Machinery changed all that, and what we may call the piecemeal system began, until now only one part of each article is made by each hand employed. Work may now be purely mechanical and unskilled—the work of a human machine supplementing the labors of a vast creature with sinews and muscles and bones of steel, and a brain worked by fire and water. And this being so, with the introduction of machinery, a greater demand necessarily arose for women's work—for untrained, unskilled labor. "Unskilled," one says. Yet when one goes through the factories where the girls work, one marvels at their skill; at the butter-scotch factory, where each piece of toffee passes through the hands of eight people with the most amazing celerity; at the button factory, where the processes are almost as many, and quite as quick; at the artificial flower factory, where the transformation of a piece of calico into a bunch of daffodils, jonquils, snowdrops or violets is so rapid that one feels that fairies might compete without loss of dignity with those rows of fuzzy-headed, nimble-fingered girls with their punchers and paste pots and bits of wire.

Whether this increased demand was of more harm or good to women of the working-classes might prove a fruitful subject for a debating society. One unfortunate result, by no means inevitable, was that it brought the interests of the women workers into opposition with those of men.

It is only in these later days that we are beginning to understand and value union and co-operation in the work of men and women.

This clashing of interests was a serious matter. Women and children appeared as "blacklegs" and undersold their husbands and fathers. Men's wages became reduced, as, in many trades, they are still reduced, by the entrance into their trade of a competitor quite as important as the immigrant alien. Wives and daughters who might have been supported by the wage of their husbands or fathers had to work to eke out the family income. The factory girl became a very important person—an additional problem for the students of political economy. And because, in those early days, those factory workers were, if not women devoid of understanding, at least women who, like most of the factory girls of the present day, accepted things unreasoningly, unquestioningly, took it for granted that their work must be inferior to that of men, and their wages as inferior as their work, a bad system was established, that only the hard work of years can put to rights.

Men work for bread; women more often for butter, or a little jam. The woman very frequently works only to supplement the wages of the man. "If she can add something to the net weekly takings of the family, that is the chief point," says one student of the subject: "She does not pause to consider what her work is worth, nor to ask why, as in the case of French polishing, printing and many other trades, she is paid for her piecework at the rate of 9s. or 10s. a week, while the man whose work is not three times superior in quality to hers, and who does not do three times as much, is paid two or three times more than she is." Her work may be as good and as rapid as that of a man, but it is an established fact that it must always

be cheaper. At the start the woman worker, and the man worker too, by his acquiescence, made an error in economics, and both of them have suffered in consequence. When women and men realize that their interests are not opposed, but identical, they will also realize that co-operation is absolutely necessary. Perhaps the song of the London factory girl is prophetic:—

There's a good day coming, some day.

In 1888 a great event took place in the history of the factory girl. That was the year of Bryant & May's match-girls' strike. "For the first time," says one writer, "the great, silent mass of struggling, starved, unskilled labor found voice, and its utterance, expressed in the unmistakable terms of a deadly struggle, and following hard upon the revelations made before the commission on the sweating system, brought home to the outside world the real state of things prevailing in the lower ranks of labor." The docker's strike of 1889 that followed rapidly on the heels of the girls' strike was of such importance that it probably helped us to forget the strike which preceded it. Yet the match strike, which found the girls entirely without organization, left them with increased wages, a union of something like one thousand strong.

Nearly a century before that the factory workers had been taken under the wing of a paternal government. For an unvarnished and ugly account of what factory hands had to put up with, before Government undertook, to a certain extent, their protection, we must go to the Blue Books for the earlier part of the last century.

The first Factory Act was passed in 1802, in the reign of George III, and was known as "The Factory Health and Morals Act." Pauper boys and girls were then herded together like wild beasts, or slaves, when slavery

was at its worst—fastened together, frequently, with chains which they wore as they worked. To be a "factory girl" was to be a white slave, who lived—could one call it living—God knows how; who died frequently before she reached womanhood, without knowing any of the beauties or joys of childhood or girlhood, but only the most squalid and sordid and ugly parts of the seamy side of life.

To the first Sir Robert Peel, himself a large employer of labor, the factory hands owed much of the redress their wrongs obtained in 1815 and later.

From 1802 onwards, statutes were passed from time to time, and in 1878 these were consolidated into a single statute, which is the foundation of the present law. And the Factory Acts, as they at present stand, are, as far as they go, sound and good. If abuses still exist, it is not with the sanction, nor because of the negligence of the State. Undoubtedly, reforms are still wanted, but as the number of women inspectors increases, they are sure to be effected. The work already done by women inspectors for the betterment of the conditions in which women and girls work in factories speaks for itself.

According to the Factory Acts a girl is called a child until she is fourteen, or unless, being thirteen years old, she has passed Standard IV of the Educational Code, when she is called a young person, and a young person she remains until her eighteenth birthday makes her country think she is quite able to protect herself, as a woman of the working classes. Even then Government does its best for her, although she is no longer protected as she was when a child. It tries to give her regular hours and regular holidays; it prohibits her from cleaning machinery while in motion; it does its best to give her, as she works, 250 cubic feet of air.

And what manner of person is this woman who is born of machinery (for machinery created the factory girl) and bred in the workshop?

There is another class of working girls with whom we have frequently compared her—that of the Scottish field-worker—the Bondager, as she is still significantly called in some parts of Scotland. Where, between two classes, there must of necessity be so many differences, it may seem difficult to determine which is the most characteristic. But what first strikes any one who has worked amongst both classes is that whereas the Scotch Bondager is for a long time very shy, almost afraid of the ladies who wish her well, those ladies are at first very shy—almost afraid of the factory girl. For the factory girl is no respecter of persons. She has little of reverence in her nature. The “forewoman in our shop” may possibly move her to respect, but she acknowledges none other of the powers that be. And one can never pretend nor pose to her. She has an eagle eye. There is no little weakness in her fellows that she does not at once detect. And to those she loves not, she is hard, cruel, merciless.

In the west central district we find some of the worst London slums. There are many large and important factories within this area, and the girls who work in them come, in almost every case, from homes consisting of one or two rooms.

When the factory girl was as yet a new friend, we went to see a girl who lived in some mews behind a big gray church in this region. Her father was a coster, and the address she had given appeared to be that of a two-stalled stable. A donkey occupied one stall and cabbages the other. And then our hostess descended a ladder and we found that she, her parents and her four younger brothers and sisters occupied the loft. That was the girl who

always gave as excuse for forgetting to bring the coppers she owed as a subscription to her club the same cheerful apology: “Ow, there now! if I ‘aven’t gone and left it at ‘ome, a-layin’ on the grand planna!”

It seems almost impossible that, under such conditions the girls should keep themselves clean and self-respecting, and yet, in plenty of cases, they succeed in this amazingly. One “Young Person,” known to us, has no father or mother, and shares a room with what she calls “a lady wot goes out charing.” She is a clean-faced little girl, with a marvellous yellow fringe when it is relieved from Hinde’s curling pins; she wears a body—when possible, of velveteen—that in color and texture never bears the remotest reference to her skirt, and she owns a vast pair of brass earrings. She never complains, and from eight to six daily she works in a toffee factory. Four shillings a week is her “standing money,” which means that she has daily to cover fourteen dozen pieces of toffee with silver paper before she begins to earn at the rate of 1d. a tray—each tray containing two dozen pieces. She is a beginner, and she says she “does not know ‘ow it is, but she never can get through more than them fourteen dozen pieces a dy.” So on 4s. per week does little Louie pay for her board, lodging, clothing and extras. “Ow, I does it some ‘ow,” she said, with a grin on her old little face, when asked how she managed it. She manages extras too. She had her photograph taken not long ago.

“I’m afride you’ll brike my ma-sheen,” says the man to me. “And wot’s your nime?” ‘e says.

So I tell ‘im, Louie Jones.

So ‘e want to gimme a Bible to ‘old, but, lor, I’m not an old pi, I says—so I wouldn’t. So then ‘e guv me a vause with me arm round it, and a bunch of flowers in me ‘and, and “Now, then, Ungry,” ‘e says. So I larked. An’

there was a click, and 'e says, says 'e. "Now, wot did I tell yer? Yer've broke me masheen!"

Her special factory is one of the most desirable in that district. Its head takes an interest in his workpeople, and the result is excellent. Although the standing wage is only 4s., girls can make as much as £1 a week in very busy times. This, however, is rare, and 8s. is about the average sum earned by a really practised hand. At the neighboring cartridge factory, the average earning for making cartridge cases is from 12s. to 15s. a week, and it is even possible to expand this—by piece-work, of course—to £1 or 25s. The work is varied, and the earnings largely depend on what department the girl is in. At an artificial flower factory in the same neighborhood, when busy, which means no off-days, the ordinary wage is about 10s. a week, while the "forewomen" get 13s. Girls are only admitted at 14, and start at 2s. 6d. a week. At some of the larger flower factories they make 30s. a week. At button factories it is all piece-work, and the earnings much depend on the favor of the forewoman. If put on good work, a girl can earn 3s. 6d. a day, but, taking bad work with good, the average earning of a quick worker is from 10s. to 15s. a week. The work is fluctuating and often slack, and, when a slack time comes, the wages go down to 5s. and 6s. a week or less.

There is a small button factory in London, where the character of the women, many of them married, is not made a condition for their employment, where most of them drink, and where the habitual conversation is as unedifying as the existence of that 250 cubic feet of air apiece, required by Act of Parliament, is doubtful. A girl who worked there—and actually came out of it uncontaminated—went back lately to see some of her old acquaintances. "I can't think how I stood it so long,"

she said. "When I went back to it to-day, it seemed to me a regular Room of 'Orrors."

Of holidays, as a rule, the girls get, according to their standard, more than enough. Bank holidays they love, the holidays when they can go to Southend or Hampstead or Wormwood Scrubbs with their friends, their "blokes" or their "old captains." But they groan in spirit over all other holidays—no work, no pay being the employer's rule, whether the holiday is of the girl's own seeking or not. A bank holiday spent with them in the country is a liberal education. With all their extensive knowledge of things better unknown, these girls are only overgrown children, and their lightness of heart and exuberance of spirits, when once they have left the workaday world behind them, is not to be described. They have an amazing and almost unending capacity for the consumption of green fruit; cucumbers that would last an ordinary individual for a week, vanish before their insatiable appetites; a hen with a family of young ducks makes them shriek with surprise. As for a bed of ripe strawberries:—

"Ow, miss!" says the amazed Maria, "I always thought strawberries grew on trees!"

To think that a bank holiday cannot be spent happily and contentedly by the factory girl unless accompanied by a young man with a concertina, who wears the coster uniform, gets very drunk as the day wears on, and changes hats on the homeward journey, is a fallacy. It would almost seem, sometimes, that a girl's "bloke" is less to her than is her friend. She "walks out" with a young man—with many young men in succession, it may be—before she finds one to her mind and matrimony is finally reached. He is a convenience. He stands her a seat at the theatre or at one of the "'Alls," and takes her to dances at his

club. He is, moreover, a fashion. It looks well to have a young man. But in the case of a factory girl, a friend sticketh closer than a young man.

Those factory-girlfriendships are very remarkable. They would seem to be of the same quality as that of David and Jonathan. For a friend in trouble a factory girl would sacrifice her all; and she would do it as a matter of course and be amazed at any one supposing that she could do otherwise. Yet her treatment of her friend is sometimes amazing. On a trifling point they will one day fall out and for many weeks will cut each other dead, until some happy circumstance—probably a funeral—brings about a reconciliation. In the long run this reconciliation is pretty sure to come, and they will never acknowledge that they have quarrelled.

"Ow, no, miss!" they say, when taxed with a quarrel, "we ain't quarrelled. We just don't speak."

In the other relations of life our factory girl cannot be found fault with. She may not be able to respect a father or mother who is more often drunk than not, and who when more than usually drunk, cuts her head open with a lamp or a chimney ornament, and drives her into the street to spend the night, but she treats them filially in their sober moments, and goes to their aid, if necessary, when she encounters them in a helpless condition outside the house. She is a good sister as a rule, and though she may use the privileges of elder sisterhood to smack the little ones when they are naughty and rebuke them in language that is probably as unrestrained as her voice is loud, yet the children know that when she has anything to share with them they will never have to go without.

If one asks if she saves any money she will probably laugh loudly and say: "Ow, miss, give over!" as if it was a good joke. All her saving is

done by means of clubs, which does not mean the club philanthropic of the lady from the West End and others, but the clubs that exist in every factory and workshop. The name of these clubs is legion. There are feather clubs, dress clubs, boot clubs, photograph clubs and money clubs. Into these, as many girls as like to join pay so much a week, and, turn about, each girl draws the sum collected. Before bank holidays, chiefly before Christmas, in certain factories and workshops there is yet another sort of club—a drink club. It is considered bad form for any girl, even if "teetotal," not to pay into this for some time before the festival her weekly contribution to the sum which when the time comes, is spent on liquor of various kinds to enable the subscribers to get agreeably drunk. It may strike one that the same end would be arrived at if the girls were to save up their money at home. But if you say this to a girl she has a ready answer—she couldn't, she would spend it, or else her mother would want it or the children. "You can't refuse 'em if it's there," she says simply. The club system also possesses the advantage that, if she is lucky she may get her money out at the first draw—before it is paid, so to speak. The possible risk of girls stopping their payments when they have had their money, was once suggested to a girl.

"Ow, miss! what d'you take us for!" was the indignant reply.

The feather clubs are, of course, the explanation of those feathers that are still the badge of the factory girl. Theirs is essentially the feathered tribe, and they will pay almost as much as a lady in Mayfair might for a stately ostrich plume to deck their hats of plush or velvet. A hat with feathers has always, in their eyes, a *cachet* of its own, even should those feathers be moulting

away to the extent of looking—to use the words of one of them—"for all the world like 'errin' bones, picked clean."

To the higher type of factory girl, the girl who, through gentler influences, has renounced many of her old ways, the defeathered hat with the white apron, gaudy kerchief, large brass earrings and Picadilly fringe, are things of an unregenerate past. To wear them is to make oneself no better than a coster girl. They are dismissed with disparagement as being "flash."

"Miss, do you remember the days when I was flash?" a girl asked one with whom she walked down Oxford Street, arm in arm, on a Sunday afternoon. "Do you remember that green plush 'at with the ginger tips?"

As she spoke she wore a dress of vivid blue and a white felt hat with nodding plumes, that made her companion feel shy, yet in her mind there was evidently a great gulf fixed between the reputable present and the horrible past.

One hears much of the vices of the factory girl, usually from those who know her least. Rough she undoubtedly is, yet as far as morals go, she compares not unfavorably with the domestic servant and most favorably with the field laborer. And she is honest. She is generous to a fault; she is, as she herself would put it, "straight." Her chief vice is drunkenness. Topsy men or women in the streets are subjects for derisive merriment to the factory girl, so long as they are not incapable. If incapable they become objects of deepest compassion. One girl, on her way home from Waterloo on the night of a bank holiday spent in the country, on seeing a drunken woman lying in the street, a woman only known to her by sight and not by name, lifted her up in her arms and carried her safely to where she knew her lodging to be. "And that beautiful new blouse of Jenny's

she got it that muddy, she'll never be able to wear it again," said the friend who told the tale.

There are few girls who are strict abstainers, although many of them only drink on holidays. A girl may be rigidly abstemious from Easter till Whit Monday, but she will expect, with a sort of resigned fatalism, to get drunk on Whit Monday. She may even be a credit to society from the August Bank Holiday until Boxing Day, but, ten to one, the evening of the 26th of December finds her and the other members of her family hopelessly drunk.

"Where's the harm?" they ask. They know that the public opinion of their set is with them.

Like children they are unreasonable, maddeningly aggravating, intolerably unreliable as to appointments, promises and engagements. But then the full use of the reasoning faculties and that fine sense of honor that does not permit a lady to throw over an engagement for a more alluring one are the result of education and heredity, and the factory girl has not yet had her chance.

She is a person of warm heart and ready sympathies, and her emotions are easily roused. Perhaps a death in the family of a friend brings out her best qualities—her sympathy, her generosity, her unselfish helpfulness. It also brings out a feature in her character which one can only regard with awed surprise. For the factory girl revels in a funeral. No old Scotchman ever enjoyed one more. And when the funeral is that of a near relation, the pomp of an unwarrantably extravagant interment, and the entire abandonment to black clothing and masses of crape seems to solace the bereaved. To be dressed in mourning fills a factory girl with melancholy pride, for she knows that her fellows are regarding her with almost envious commiseration. It is a

distinction to have recently lost a member of one's family.

Perhaps it was with some vague, unformed idea of this sort that a little party of girls called upon one of their club "ladies" one night.

"Miss," said the spokeswoman, "ain't you got a brother in the war?"

The lady assented.

"Ain't his nime Major—?"

The lady assented again.

"Well, Miss, 'e's dead!" said this bearer of evil tidings; "it's on all the posters!"

Fortunately for the lady, her informant's news was erroneous.

We have spoken of what Government does, or tries to do, for the factory girl. But other friends and protectors she has, of whom the Blue Books know nothing.

There is work going on amongst the girls in their leisure hours, steadily, quietly, progressively, confined to no one sect or denomination. Clubs for working girls are to be found all over London, and the list of things taught in them is almost unending—sewing, dressmaking, gymnastics, musical drill, ambulance and sick-nursing, reading, writing, arithmetic, part-singing, cooking, swimming. One club adds deportment and elocution, while another teaches French, drawing, embroidery, literature and composition, and the impressive item of a "dramatic class." Dancing is an almost unnecessary extra at these finishing schools, for there was never a factory girl who did not learn to dance to the barrel organs in her childhood, and who was not able to instruct the club ladies, not only in those dances already known to them, but in "The Twist," and many other elaborate dances. The factory girl seems to be born a good dancer. All the clubs have libraries, and some of the girls find that there is as good reading to be got in standard books as in the penny novels dear to their hearts

—"The Countess's Crime," "The Duchess's Secret." The number of titles in those works is only exceeded by the amount of blood spilt in them.

On half holidays there are frequently excursions with a club lady to the Zoo—the Botanical Gardens—a museum—or a picture gallery. At the Tate Gallery a girl stopped in front of a famous painting of the young man with great possessions. "Oo's that down-hearted-looking bloke?" she asked.

A gentleman whose instincts are, possibly, more scientific than philanthropic, was once asked whether he believed in clubs for factory girls. "Yes, certainly," he said, "they do the ladies who run them a lot of good, and they don't seem to do the girls any harm." And he was certainly right in thinking that any one who tries to help those girls must learn much in the trying.

There are those who imagine that they know the factory girl because they have seen what professes to be a photograph of her in the novel of the sentimental writer who always slays her young, or in the stories of the Decadents. The literary photograph of the factory girl has yet to be taken. "Mord Emly" who was not a factory hand, is the only character in fiction who satisfies the friends of the London factory girl. We must try to read the girl herself, and, as our knowledge increases, our theories fade away.

The workers who come to improve the factory girl are sometimes of a curious and unexpected order. One lady was bequeathed as a sort of legacy to a club by a most admirable worker who had to leave London. The legacy would have graced the smartest victoria in the Park. She came in black and diamonds, and was much excited to find herself in what appeared to her a very low locality, and without adequate protection. She was good-looking, and her intentions were excel-

lent. She allowed any girl who wished to touch her diamonds. She asked a lady, a parish worker of unobtrusive exterior, who played the piano, which factory she worked at. She regarded the girls with open curiosity and horror. "Poor devils!" she murmured to herself every now and then. She suggested sending a selection of them on the following evening to the play. "But supposin' I send my maid with them," she said, when cold water was thrown on the scheme, "*that* will be all right." She afterwards sent a most handsome donation to the club, but she was never registered as a regular worker.

At the other extreme was a lady of socialistic tendencies, who read Edward Carpenter, and was a devout disciple of the Fabian Society. She found fault with the club because it was run on much too autocratic principles. She frequently quoted a club, somewhere "*across the water*," where the girls kissed all the ladies every evening as the club broke up. She not only disapproved of the ladies, but of the girls. And if one does not care for those girls it is vain to pretend to care.

Nor did she pretend. It was an evil night for that lady when the club girls gave a concert to their friends. She sang, and they did not appreciate her soprano solo. In one of its softer passages a girl's voice was upraised. "What's that noise?" she asked. In vain did those in authority try to frown her down. A pleased smile of intense surprise broke over her face. "Ow!" she exclaimed, in a voice there was no drowning, "it's Miss Brown! I thought it was the kettle b'illin'!"

One of the most important points in regard to working a club is that there should be unity of purpose and method amongst the workers themselves. However strongly defined the characters of those ladies may be, how-

ever decided their views, they must unanimously conform to some wide general principle of working. Regularity is as necessary as unanimity. The lady who works at a club just when it happens to suit her is more often a hindrance than a help. Two other points there are of most serious import. The first of these is to work from within, not from without—to know the girls in their own homes, to do one's very best to realize what their surroundings, their characters and consequently their difficulties and temptations are. Until one does this one cannot hope to help them to learn the rudiments either of manners or morals. To begin with, one must care for them. And when once they are sure one does, when once they return the love they receive, all things are possible. Secondly, whatever may be the creed of the individual worker, she must in the long run be forced to acknowledge that, however useful, however improving a purely secular club may be, its work is not for permanent, lasting effect, comparable to the work done on a religious basis.

The factory girl is a rude, noisy, white-aproned girl, who swings roughly against one in the Euston Road, addressing each male passer-by, indiscriminately, as "George, dear," and who laughs in a way that jars the nerves of the delicately nurtured. She is often a disappointing creature to those who would help her—a person of depressing surprises—heart-breaking at times to those who love her. Yet she is a friend worth having—loyal and straight and true. She has not yet wholly emerged from her original savage state, but she is rapidly emerging. One watches her gaining visibly in dignity, self-respect and decorum. What she will be when her evolution is accomplished, one dare not prophesy.

But one is very hopeful.

BRIGHTEN'S SISTER-IN-LAW.

Jim was born on Gulgong, New South Wales. We used to say "on" Gulgong—and old diggers still talked of being "on th' Gulgong"—though the gold field there had been worked out for years, and the place was only a dusty little pastoral town in the scrubs. Gulgong was about the last of the great alluvial "rushes" of the "roaring days"—and dreary and dismal enough it looked when I was there. The expression "on" came from being on the "diggings" or goldfield—the workings or the goldfield was all underneath, of course, so we lived (or starved) *on* them—not in or at 'em.

Mary and I had been married about two years when Jim came—His name wasn't "Jim," by the way, it was "John Henry," after an uncle godfather; but we called him Jim from the first—and before it)—because Jim was a popular bush name, and most of my old mates were Jims. The bush is full of good-hearted scamps called Jim.

We lived in an old weather-board shanty that had been a sly-grog-shop, and the Lord knows what else! in the palmy days of Gulgong; and I did a bit of digging ("fossicking," rather), a bit of shearing, a bit of fencing, a bit of bush-carpentering, tank-sinking—anything, just to keep the billy boiling.

We had a lot of trouble with Jim with his teeth. He was bad with every one of them, and we had most of them lanced—couldn't pull him through without. I remember we got one lanced and the gum healed over before the tooth came through and we had to get it cut again. He was a plucky little chap, and after the first time he never whimpered when the doctor was lancing his teeth; he used to say "tar" af-

terwards, and want to bring the lance home with him.

The first turn we got with Jim was the worst. I had had the wife and Jim out camping with me in a tent at a dam I was making at Cattle Creek; I had two men working for me, and a boy to drive one of the tip-drays, and I took Mary out to cook for us. And it was lucky for us that the contract was finished and we got back to Gulgong, and within reach of a doctor, the night we did. We were just camping in the house, with our goods and chattels anyhow, for the night; and we were hardly back home an hour when Jim took convulsions for the first time.

Did you ever see a child in convulsions? You wouldn't want to see it again; it plays the devil with a man's nerves. I'd got the beds fixed up on the floor and the billies on the fire—I was going to make some tea, and put a piece of corned beef on to boil over night—when Jim (he'd been queer all day, and his mother was trying to hush him to sleep)—Jim, he screamed out twice. He'd been crying a good deal, and I was dog-tired and worried (over some money a man owed me) or I'd have noticed at once that there was something unusual in the way the child cried out; as it was I didn't turn round till Mary screamed "Joe! Joe!" You know how a woman cries out when her child is in danger or dying—short and sharp and terrible. "Joe! Look! look! Oh, my God! our child! Get the bath, quick! quick! it's convulsions!"

Jim was bent back like a bow, stiff as a bullock-yoke, in his mother's arms, and his eye-balls were turned up and fixed—a thing I saw twice afterwards and don't want ever to see again.

I was falling over things getting the tub and the hot water, when the woman who lived next door rushed in. She called to her husband to run for the doctor, and before the doctor came she and Mary had got Jim into a hot bath and pulled him through.

The neighbor woman made me up a "shake-down" in another room, and stayed with Mary that night; but it was a long while before I got Jim and Mary's screams out of my head and fell asleep.

You may depend I kept the fire in, and a bucket of water hot over it, for a good many nights after that; but (it always happens like this) there came a night (when the fright had worn off) when I was too tired to bother about the fire, and that night Jim took us by surprise. Our wood-heap was done, and I broke up a new chair to get a fire, and had to run a quarter of a mile for water; but this turn wasn't so bad as the first, and we pulled him through.

You never saw a child in convulsions? Well, you don't want to. It must be only a matter of seconds, but it seems long minutes; and half an hour afterwards the child might be laughing and playing with you, or stretched out dead. It shook me up a lot. I was always pretty high-strung and sensitive. After Jim took the first fit, every time he cried or turned over or stretched out in the night, I'd jump; I was always feeling his forehead in the dark to see if he was feverish, or feeling his limbs to see if he was "limp" yet. Mary and I often laughed about it—(afterwards). I tried sleeping in another room, but for nights after Jim's first attack I'd be just dozing off into a sound sleep, when I'd hear him scream as plain as could be, and Mary cry, "Joe!—Joe!"—short, sharp and terrible—and I'd be up and into their room like a shot, only to find them sleeping peacefully. Then I'd feel Jim's head

and his breathing for signs of convulsions, see to the fire and water, and go back to bed and try to sleep. For the first few nights I was like that all night, and I'd feel relieved when daylight came. I'd be in first thing to see if they were all right, then I'd sleep till it was dinner-time if it was Sunday or I had no work. But then I was run down about that time; I was worried about some money for a wool-shed I put up and never got paid for; and besides I'd been pretty wild before I met Mary.

I was fighting hard then—struggling for something better. Both Mary and I were born to better things, and that's what made the life so hard for us.

Jim got on all right for a while; we used to watch him well and have his teeth lanced in time.

It used to hurt and worry me to see how—just as he was getting fat and rosy and like a natural happy child, and I'd feel proud to take him out—a tooth would come along, and he'd get thin and white, and pale and bigger-eyed and old-fashioned. We'd say, "He'll be safe when he gets his eye-teeth;" but he didn't get them till he was two; then, "He'll be safe when he gets his two-year-old teeth;" they didn't come till he was going on for three.

He was a wonderful little chap; yes, I know all about parents thinking that their child is the best in the world. If your boy is small for his age, friends will say that small children make big men; that he's a very bright, intelligent child, and that it's better to have a bright, intelligent child than a big, sleepy lump of fat. And if your boy is dull and sleepy, they say that the dullest boys make the cleverest men—and all the rest of it. I never took any notice of that sort of clatter—took it for what it was worth; but all the same, I don't think I ever saw such a child as Jim was when he turned two. He was

everybody's favorite. They spoilt him rather. I had my own ideas about bringing up a child. I reckoned Mary was too soft with Jim. She'd say, "Put that" (whatever it was) "out of Jim's reach, will you, Joe?" and I'd say, "No! leave it there and make him understand he's not to have it. Make him have his meals without any nonsense, and go to bed at a regular hour," I'd say. Mary and I had many a breeze over Jim. She'd say that I forgot he was only a baby; but I held that a baby could be trained from the first week; and I believe I was right.

But, after all, what are you to do? You'll see a boy that was brought up strict turn out a scamp; and another that was dragged up anyhow (by the hair of the head as the saying was) turn out well. Then, again, when a child is delicate—and you might lose him any day—you don't like to spank him, though he might be turning out a little fiend, as delicate children often do. Suppose you gave a child a hammering, and the same night he took convulsions, or something, and died—how'd you feel about it? You never know what a child is going to take, any more than you can tell what some sort of women are going to say or do.

I was very fond of Jim, and we were great chums. Sometimes I'd sit and wonder what the deuce he was thinking about, and often, the way he talked he'd make me uneasy. When he was two he wanted a pipe above all things, and I'd get him a clean new clay, and he'd sit by my side, on the edge of the veranda, or on a log of the wood-heap, in the cool of the evening, and suck away at his pipe, and try to spit when he saw me do it. He seemed to understand that a cold, empty pipe wasn't quite the thing, yet to have the sense to know that he couldn't smoke tobacco yet; he made the best he could of things. And if he broke a clay pipe he wouldn't

have a new one, and there'd be a row; the old one had to be mended up, somehow, with string or wire. If I got my hair cut, he'd want his cut too; and it always troubled him to see me shave—as if he thought there must be something wrong somewhere, else he ought to have to be shaved too. I lathered him one day, and pretended to shave him; he sat through it as solemn as an owl, but didn't seem to appreciate it—perhaps he had sense enough to know that it couldn't possibly be the real thing. He felt his face, looked very hard at the lather I scraped off, and whimpered, "No blood, daddy!"

I used to cut myself a good deal; I was always impatient over shaving.

Then he went in to interview his mother about it. She understood his lingo better than I did.

But I wasn't always at ease with him. Sometimes he'd sit looking into the fire, with his head on one side, and I'd watch him and wonder what he was thinking about (I might as well have wondered what a Chinaman was thinking about) till he seemed at least twenty years older than me; sometimes, when I moved or spoke, he'd glance round just as if to see what that old fool of a dadda of his was doing now.

I used to have a fancy that there was something Eastern, or Asiatic—something older than our civilization or religion—about old-fashioned children. Once I started to explain my idea to a woman I thought would understand—and as it happened she had an old-fashioned child, with very slant eyes—a little tartar he was too. I suppose it was the sight of him that unconsciously reminded me of my infernal theory, and set me off on it without warning me. Anyhow it got me mixed up in an awful row with the woman and her husband—and all their tribe. It wasn't an easy thing to

explain myself out of it, and the row hasn't been fixed up yet.

I took a good-sized fencing contract, the frontage of a ten-mille paddock, near Gulgong, and did well out of it. The railway had got as far as the Cudgeegong river—some twenty miles from Gulgong and two hundred from the coast—and “carrying” was good then. I had a couple of draught horses, that I worked in the tip-drays when I was tank-sinking, and one or two others running in the bush. I bought a broken-down wagon cheap, tinkered it up myself—christened it “The Same Old Thing”—and started carrying from the railway terminus through Gulgong and along the bush roads and tracks that branched out fanlike through the scrubs to the one-pub. towns and sheep and cattle stations out there in the howling wilderness. It wasn't much of a team. There were the two heavy horses for “shafter,” a stunted colt, that I'd bought out of the pound for thirty shillings; a light spring-cart horse; an old gray mare, with points like a big red and white Australian store bullock, and with the grit of an old washerwoman to work; and a horse that had spanked along in Cobb & Co.'s mail-coach in his time. I had a couple there that didn't belong to me; I worked them for the feeding of them in the dry weather. And I had all sorts of harness, that I mended and fixed up myself. It was a mixed team, but I took light stuff, got through pretty quick, and freight rates were high. So I got along.

Before this, whenever I made a few pounds I'd sink a shaft somewhere, prospecting for gold; but Mary never let me rest till she talked me out of that.

I made up my mind to take on a small “selection” farm—that an old mate of mine had fenced in and cleared, and afterwards “chucked up”—about thirty miles out west of Gul-

gong, at a place called Lahey's Creek. (The places were all called Lahey's Creek, or Spicer's Flat, or Murphy's Flat, or Ryan's Crossing, or some such name—round there.) I reckoned I'd have a run for the horses and be able to grow a bit of feed. I always had a dread of taking Mary and the children too far away from a doctor—or a good woman neighbor; but there were some people came to live on Lahey's Creek, and besides, there was a young brother of Mary's—a young scamp (his name was Jim, too, by the way, and we called him “Jimmy” to make room for our Jim—he hated the name “Jimmy” or James). He came to live with us—without asking—and I thought he'd find enough work at Lahey's Creek to keep him out of mischief. He wasn't to be depended on much—he thought nothing of riding off, five hundred miles or so, “to have a look at the country”—but he was fond of Mary, and he'd stay by her till I got some one else to keep her company while I was on the road. He would be a protection against “sundowners” or any shearers who happened to wander that way in the “D.T.'s” after a spree. Mary had a married sister come to live at Gulgong just before we left, and nothing would suit her and her husband but we must leave little Jim with them for a month or so—till we got settled down at Lahey's Creek. They were newly married.

Mary was to have driven into Gulgong, in the spring-cart, at the end of the month and taken Jim home; but when the time came she wasn't too well—and, besides the tires of the cart were loose and I hadn't time to get them cut, so we let Jim's time run on a week or so longer, till I happened to come out through Gulgong from the river with a small load of flour for Lahey's Creek way. The roads were good, the weather grand—no chance of it raining, and I had a spare tarpaulin

if it did—I would only camp out one night; so I decided to take Jim home with me.

Jim was turning three then, and he was a cure. He was so old-fashioned that he used to frighten me sometimes—I'd almost think that there was something supernatural about him; though of course I never took any notice of that rot about some children being too old-fashioned to live. There's always the ghoulish old hag (and some not so old nor haggish either) who'll come round and shake up young parents with such croaks as, "You'll never rear that child—he's too bright for his age." To the devil with them! I say.

But I really thought that Jim was too intelligent for his age, and I often told Mary that he ought to be kept back, and not let talk too much to old diggers and long lanky jokers of bushmen who rode in and hung their horses outside my place on Sunday afternoons.

I don't believe in parents talking about their own children everlastingly—you get sick of hearing them; and their kids are generally little devils, and turn out larrikins as likely as not.

But, for all that, I really think that Jim, when he was three years old, was the most wonderful little chap, in every way, that I ever saw.

For the first hour or so, along the road, he was telling me all about his adventures at his auntie's.

"But they spoilt me too much, dad," he said, as solemn as a native bear. "An' besides, a boy ought to stick to his parrans!" (parents).

I was taking out a cattle-pup for a drover I knew, and the pup took up a good deal of Jim's time.

Sometimes he'd jolt me, the way he talked; and other times I'd have to turn away my head and cough or shout at the horses to keep from laughing outright. And once, when I was taken that way, he said—

"What are you jerking your shoulders and coughing, and grunting, and going on that way for, dad? Why don't you tell me something?"

"Tell you what, Jim?"

"Tell me some talk."

So I told him all the talk I could think of. And I had to brighten up, I can tell you, and not draw too much on my imagination—for Jim was a terror at cross-examination when the fit took him; and he didn't think twice about telling you when he thought you were talking nonsense. Once he said—

"I'm glad you took me home with you, dad. You'll get to know Jim."

"What?" I said.

"You'll get to know Jim."

"But don't I know you already?"

"No, you don't. You never has time to know Jim at home."

And looking back I saw that it was cruel true. I had known in my heart all along that this was the truth; but it came to me like a blow from Jim. You see it had been a hard struggle for the last year or so; and when I was home for a day or two I was generally too busy, or too tired and worried, or full of schemes for the future, to take much notice of Jim. Mary used to speak to me about it sometimes. "You never take notice of the child," she'd say. "You could surely find a few minutes of an evening. What's the use of always worrying and brooding? Your brain will go with a snap some day, and, if you get over it, it will teach you a lesson. You'll be an old man, and Jim a young one, before you realize that you had a child once. Then it will be too late."

This sort of talk from Mary always bored me and made me impatient with her, because I knew it all too well. I never worried for myself—only Mary and the children. And I often, as the days went by, said to myself, "I'll take more notice of Jim and give Mary more of my time, just as soon as I can see

things clear ahead a bit." And the hard days went on, and the weeks, and the months, and the years— Ah, well!

Mary used to say, when things would get worse, "Why don't you talk to me, Joe? Why don't you tell me your thoughts, instead of shutting yourself up in yourself and brooding—eating your heart out? It's hard for me; I get to think you're tired of me, and selfish. I might be cross and speak sharp to you when you are in trouble. How am I to know if you don't tell me?"

But I didn't think she'd understand.

And so, getting acquainted, and chumming and dozing, with the gums closing over our heads here and there, and the ragged patches of sunlight and shade passing up over the horses, over us, on the front of the load, over the load, and down on to the white dusty road again—Jim and I got along the lonely bush road and over the ridges some fifteen miles (we'd started late) before sunset, and camped at Ryan's Crossing on Sandy Creek for the night. I got the horses out and took the harness off. Jim wanted badly to help me, but I made him stay on the load; for one of the horses—a vicious, red-eyed chestnut—was a kicker; he'd broken a man's leg. I got the feed-bags stretched across the shafts, and the chaff and corn into them, and there stood the horses all round with their rumps north, south and west, and their heads between the shafts, munching and switching their tails. We use double shafts, you know, for horse-teams—two pairs side by side—and prop them up, and stretch bags between them, letting the bags sag to serve as feed-boxes. I threw the spare tarpaulin over the wheels on one side, letting about half of it lie on the ground in case of damp, and so making a floor and a break-wind. I threw down bags and the blankets and 'possum rug against the wheel to make a camp for Jim and the cattle-pup, and

got a gin-case we used for a tucker-box, the frying-pan and billy down, and made a good fire at a log close handy, and soon everything was comfortable. Ryan's Crossing was a grand camp. I stood with my pipe in my mouth, my hands behind my back, and my back to the fire, and took the country in.

Reedy Creek came down along a western spur of the range; the banks here were deep and green, and the water ran clear over the granite bars, boulders and gravel. Behind us was a dreary flat covered with those gnarled, gray-barked, dry-rotted "native apple-trees" (about as much like apple-trees as the native bear is like any other), and a nasty bit of sandy dusty road that I was always glad to get over in wet weather. To the left on our side of the creek were reedy marshes, with frogs croaking, and across the creek the dark box-scrub-covered ridges ended in steep "sidings" coming down to the creek bank, and to the main road that skirted them, running on west up over a "saddle" in the ridges and on towards Dubbo. The road by Lahey's Creek to a place called Cobborah branched off, through dreary apple-tree and stringy bark flats, to the left, just beyond the crossing; all these fanlike branch tracks from the Cudgegong were inside a big horse-shoe in the Great Western Line, and so they gave small carriers a chance, now that Cobb & Co.'s coaches and the big teams and vans had shifted out of the main western terminus. There were tall she-oaks all along the creek, and a clump of big ones over a deep water-hole just above the crossing. The creek oaks have rough barked trunks, like English elms, but are much taller and higher to the branches—and the leaves are reedy; Kendel, the Australian poet, calls them the "she-oak harps Aeolian." Those trees are always sigh-sigh-sighing—more of a sigh than a sough, or the "whoosh" of gum-trees in

the wind. You always hear them sighing, even when *you* can't feel any wind. It's the same with telegraph wires; put your head against a telegraph-post on a dead, still day, and you hear and *feel* the far-away roar of the wires. But then the oaks are not connected with the distance, where there might be wind; and they don't *roar* in a gale, only sigh louder and softer according to the wind, and never seem to go above nor below a certain pitch—like a big harp with all the strings the same. I used to have a theory that those creek oaks got the wind's voice telephoned to them, so to speak, through the ground.

I happened to look down, and there was Jim (I thought he was on the tarpaulin, playing with the pup); he was standing close beside me with his legs wide apart, his hands behind his back, and his back to the fire.

He held his head a little on one side, and there was such an old, old, wise expression in his big brown eyes—just as if he'd been a child for a hundred years or so, or as though he were listening to those oaks, and understanding them in a fatherly sort of way.

"Dad!" he said presently—"Dad! do you think I'll ever grow up to be a man?"

"Wh—why, Jim?" I gasped.

"Because I don't want to."

I couldn't think of anything against this. It made me uneasy.

"Jim," I said, to break the silence, "do you hear what the she-oaks say?"

"No, I don't. Is they talking?"

"Yes," I said, without thinking.

"What is they saying?"

I scratched my head hard and took the bucket and went down to the creek for some water for tea. I thought Jim would follow with a little tin billy he had; but he didn't; when I got back to the fire he was again on the 'possum rug comforting the pup. I fried some

bacon and eggs that I'd brought out with me. Jim sang out from the wagon—

"Don't cook too much, dad—I mightn't be hungry."

I got the tin plates and pint-pots and things out on a clean new flour-bag, in honor of Jim, and dished up. He was leaning back on the rug looking at the pup in a listless sort of way. I reckoned he was tired out, and pulled the gin-case up close to him for a table and put his plate on it. But he only tried a mouthful or two, and then he said—

"I ain't hungry, dad! You'll have to eat it all."

It made me uneasy—I never liked to see a child of mine turn from his food. They had given him some tinned salmon in Gulgong, and I was afraid that was upsetting him. I was always against tinned muck.

"Sick, Jim?" I asked.

"No, dad, I ain't sick; I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Have some tea, sonny?"

"Yes, dad."

I gave him some tea, with some milk in it that I'd brought in a bottle from his aunt's for him. He took a sip or two and then put the pint-pot on the gin-case.

"Jim's tired, dad," he said.

I made him lie down while I fixed up a camp for the night. It had turned a bit chilly, so I let the big tarpaulin down all round—it was made to cover a high load. The flour in the wagon didn't come above the rail, so the tarpaulin came down well on to the ground. I fixed Jim up a comfortable bed under the tail-end of the wagon; when I went to lift him in he was lying back, looking up at the stars in a half-dreamy, half-fascinated way that I didn't like. Whenever Jim was extra old-fashioned or affectionate, there was danger.

"How do you feel now, sonny?"

It seemed a minute before he heard me and turned from the stars.

"Jim's better, dad." Then he said something like, "The stars are looking at me." I thought he was half asleep. I took off his jacket and boots, and carried him in under the wagon and made him comfortable for the night.

"Kiss me 'night-night, dadda," he said.

I'd rather he hadn't asked me—it was a bad sign. As I was going to the fire he called me back.

"What is it, Jim?"

"Get me my things and the cattle-pup, please, daddy."

I was scared now. His things were some toys and rubbish he'd brought from Gulgong, and I remembered, the last time he had convulsions he took all his toys and a kitten to bed with him. And "night-night" and "daddy" were two-year-old language to Jim. I'd thought he'd forgotten those words—he seemed to be going back.

"Are you quite warm enough, Jim?"

"Yes, dad."

I started to walk up and down—I always did this when I was extra worried.

I was frightened now about Jim, though I tried to hide the fact from myself. Presently he called me again.

"What is it, Jim?"

"Take the blankets off me, fahver—Jim's sick!" (They'd been teaching him to say father.)

I was scared now. I remembered a neighbor of ours had a little girl died (she swallowed a pin), and when she was going she said—

"Take the blankets off me, muvver—I'm dyin'."

And I couldn't get that out of my head.

I threw back a fold of the 'possum rug, and felt Jim's head—he seemed cool enough.

"Where do you feel bad, sonny?"

No answer for a while; then he said

suddenly, but in a voice as if he were talking in his sleep—

"Put my books [boots] on, please, daddy. I want to go home to muvver!"

I held his hand and comforted him for a while; then he slept—in a restless, feverish sort of way.

I got the bucket I used for water for the horses and stood it over the fire; I ran to the creek with the big kerosene-tin bucket and got it full of cold water and stood it handy. I got the spade (we always carried one to dig wheels out of bogs in wet weather) and turned a corner of the tarpaulin back, dug a hole, and trod the tarpaulin down into the hole, to serve for a bath, in case of the worst. I had a tin of mustard, and meant to fight a good round for Jim, if death came along.

I stooped in under the tail-board of the wagon and felt Jim. His head was burning hot, and his skin parched and dry as a bone.

Then I lost nerve and started blundering backward and forward between the wagon and the fire, and repeating what I'd heard Mary say the last time we fought for Jim: "God! don't take my child! God! don't take my boy." I'd never had much faith in doctors, but, my God! I wanted one then. The nearest was fifteen miles away.

I threw back my head and stared up at the branches in desperation; and—Well, I don't ask you to take much stock in this, though most old bushmen will believe anything of the bush by night; and—Now, it might have been that I was all unstrung, or it might have been a patch of sky outlined in the gently moving branches or the blue smoke rising up. But I saw the figure of a woman, all white, come down, down, nearly to the limbs of the trees, point on up the main road, and then float up and up and vanish, still pointing. I thought Mary was dead. Then it flashed on me—

Four or five miles up the road, over the "saddle," was an old shanty that had been a half-way inn before the Great Western Line got round as far as Dubbo and took the coach traffic off those old bush roads. A man named Brighten lived there. He was a selector; did a little farming, and as much sly-grog selling as he could. He was married—but it wasn't that; I'd thought of them, but she was a childish, worn-out, spiritless woman, and both were pretty "ratty" from hardship and loneliness—they weren't likely to be of any use to me. But it was this: I'd heard talk among some women in Gulgong, of a sister of Brighten's wife who'd gone out to live with them lately; she'd been a hospital matron in the city they said; and there were yarns about her. Some said she got the sack for exposing the doctors—or carrying on with them—I didn't remember which. The fact of a city woman going out to live in such a place, with such people, was enough to make talk among women in a town twenty miles away, but then there must have been something extra about her, else bushmen wouldn't have talked and carried her name so far; and I wanted a woman out of the ordinary now. I even reasoned this way, thinking like lightning, as I knelt over Jim between the big black wheels of the wagon.

I had an old racing mare that I used as a riding hack, following the team. In a minute I had her saddled and bridled; I tied the end of a half-full chaff-bag, shook the chaff into each end and dumped it on to the pommel as a cushion or buffer for Jim; I wrapped him in a blanket, and scrambled into the saddle with him.

The next minute we were stumbling down the steep bank, clattering and splashing over the crossing, and struggling up the opposite bank to the level. The mare, as I told you, was an old

racer, but broken-winded—she must have run without wind after the first half-mile. She had the old racing instinct in her strong, and whenever I rode in company I'd have to pull her hard else she'd race the other horse or burst. She ran low fore and aft, and was the easiest horse I ever rode. She ran like wheels on rails, with a bit of a tremble now and then—like a railway carriage—when she settled down to it.

The chaff-bag had slipped off, in the creek, I suppose, and I let the bridle-rein go, and held Jim up to me like a baby the whole way. Let the strongest man, who isn't used to it, hold a baby in one position for five minutes—and Jim was fairly heavy. But I never felt the ache in my arms that night—it must have gone before I was in a fit state of mind to feel it. And at home I'd often growled about being asked to hold the baby for a few minutes. I could never brood comfortably and nurse a baby at the same time. It was a ghostly moonlight night. There's no timber in the world so ghostly as the Australian bush in moonlight—or just about daybreak. The all-shaped patches of moonlight falling between ragged, twisted boughs; the ghostly blue-white bark of the white-box trees; a dead, naked white, ring-barked tree or dead white stump starting out here and there, and the ragged patches of shade and light on the road that made anything from the shape of a spotted bullock to a naked corpse laid out stark. Roads and tracks through the bush made by moonlight—every one seeming straighter and clearer than the real one; you have to trust to your horse then. Sometimes the naked white trunk of a red stringy bark-tree, where a sheet of bark had been taken off, would start out like a ghost from the dark bush. And dew or frost glistening on these things, according to the

season. Now and again great gray kangaroos, that had been feeding on a green patch down by the road, would start with a "thump-thump," and away up the siding.

The bush seemed full of ghosts that night—all going my way—and being left behind by the mare. Once I stopped to look at Jim; I just sat back and the mare "propped"—she'd been a stock-horse too, and used to "cutting-out." I felt Jim's hands and forehead; he was in a burning fever. I bent forward, and the old mare settled down to it again. I kept saying out loud—and Mary and me often laughed about it (afterwards): "He's limp yet!—Jim's limp yet!" (the words seemed jerked out of me by sheer fright)—"He's limp yet!" till the mare's feet took it up. Then, just when I thought she was doing her best and racing her hardest, she suddenly *started forward*, like a cable tram, gliding along its own, and the grip put on suddenly. It was just what she'd do when I'd be riding alone and a strange horse drew up from behind—the old racing instinct. I *felt* the thing too! I felt as if a strange horse *was* there! And then—the words just jerked out of me by sheer funk—I started saying, "Death is riding to-night! . . . Death is racing to-night! . . . Death is riding to-night!" till the hoofs took that up. And I believe the old mare felt the black horse at her side and was going to beat him or break her heart.

I don't know how she got up the last "pinch." She must have slackened pace, but I never noticed it; I just held Jim up to me and gripped the saddle with my knees—I remember the saddle jerked from the desperate jumps of her till I thought the girth would go. We topped the gap and were going down into a gully they called Dead Man's Hollow, and there at the back of a ghostly clearing that opened from the road where there were some black-

soil springs, was a long, low, oblong weatherboard-and-shingle building, with blind, broken windows in the gable-ends, and a wide, steep veranda roof slanting down almost to the level of the window-sills—there was something sinister about it, I thought—like the hat of a jail-bird slouched over his eyes. The place looked both deserted and haunted. I saw no light, but that was because of the moonlight outside. The mare turned in at the corner of the clearing to take a short cut to the shanty, and, as she struggled across some marshy ground, my heart kept jerking out the words, "It's deserted! They've gone away! It's deserted!" The mare went round to the back and pulled up between the back door and a big bark and slab kitchen. Some one shouted from inside—

"Who's there?"

"It's me. Joe Wilson. I want your sister-in-law—I've got the boy—he's sick and dying!"

Brighten came out, pulling up his moleskins. "What boy?" he asked.

"Here, take him," I shouted, "and let me get down."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Brighten, and he seemed to hang back. And just as I made to get my leg over the saddle, Jim's head went back over my arm, he stiffened, and I saw his eyeballs turned up and glistening in the moonlight. I felt cold all over then and sick in the stomach—but *clear-headed* in a way; strange, wasn't it? I don't know why I didn't get down and rush into the kitchen and get a bath ready. I only felt as if the worst had come, and I wished it were over and gone. I even thought of Mary and the funeral.

Then a woman ran out of the house—a big, hard-looking woman. She had on a wrapper of some sort, and her feet were bare. She laid her hand on Jim, looked at his face, and then snatched him from me and ran into the

kitchen—and me down and after her. As great good luck would have it, they had some dirty clothes on to boil in a kerosene tin—dish-cloths or something.

Brighten's sister-in-law dragged a tub out from under the table, wrenched the bucket off the hook, and dumped in the water, dish-cloths and all, snatched a can of cold water from a corner, dashed that in, and felt the water with her hand—holding Jim up to her hip all the time—and I won't say how he looked. She stood him in the tub and started dashing water over him, tearing off his clothes between the splashes.

"Here, that tin of mustard—there on the shelf!" she shouted to me.

She knocked the lid off the tin on the edge of the tub, and went on splashing and spanking Jim.

It seemed an eternity—and I? Why, I never thought clearer in my life. I felt cold-blooded—I felt as if I'd like an excuse to go outside till it was all over. I even thought of Mary and the funeral—and wished that was over. All this in a flash, as it were. I felt that it would be a great relief, and only wished the funeral was months past. I felt—well, altogether selfish. I only thought of myself.

Brighten's sister-in-law splashed and spanked him hard—hard enough to break his back I thought, and—after about half an hour it seemed—the end came; Jim's limbs relaxed, he slipped down into the tub, and the pupils of his eyes came down. They seemed dull and expressionless, like the eyes of a new baby, but he was back for the world again.

I dropped on the stool by the table.

"It's all right," she said. "It's all over now. I wasn't going to let him die." I was only thinking, "Well, it's over now, but it will come on again. I wish it was over for good. I'm tired of it."

She called to her sister, Mrs. Brighten,

a washed-out, helpless little fool of a woman, who'd been running in and out and whimpering all the time—

"Here, Jessie! bring the new white blanket off my bed. And you, Brighten, take some of that wood off the fire, and stuff something in that hole there to stop the draught."

Brighten—he was a nuggety little hairy man with no expression to be seen for whiskers—had been running in with sticks and back logs from the wood heap. He took the wood out, stuffed up the crack, and went inside and brought out a black bottle—got a cup from the shelf and put both down near my elbow.

Mrs. Brighten started to get some supper, or breakfast, or whatever it was, ready. She had a clean cloth and set the table tidily. I noticed that all the tins were polished bright (old coffee- and mustard-tins and the like, that they used instead of sugar-basins and tea-caddies and salt-cellar), and the kitchen was kept as clean as possible. She was all right at little things. I knew a haggard, worked-out bush woman who put her whole soul—or all she'd got left—into polishing old tins till they dazzled your eyes.

I didn't feel inclined for corned beef and damper, and post-and-rail tea. So I sat and squinted, when I thought she wasn't looking, at Brighten's sister-in-law. She was a big woman, her hands and feet were big, but well-shaped and all in proportion—they fitted her. She was a handsome woman—about forty I should think. She had a square chin, and a straight, thin-lipped mouth—straight save for a hint of a turn down at the corners, which I fancied (and I have strange fancies) had been a sign of weakness in the days before she grew hard. There was no sign of weakness now. She had hard gray eyes and blue-black hair. She hadn't spoken yet. She didn't ask me how the boy took ill or I got there, or who or

what I was—at least not until the next evening at tea-time.

She sat upright with Jim wrapped in the blanket and laid across her knees, with one hand under his neck and the other laid lightly on him, and she just rocked him gently.

She sat looking hard and straight before her, just as I've seen a tired needlewoman sit with her work in her lap, and look away back into the past. And Jim might have been the work in her lap, for all she seemed to think of him. Now and then she knitted her forehead and blinked.

Suddenly she glanced round and said—in a tone as if I was her husband and she didn't think much of me—

"Why don't you eat something?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Eat something!"

I drank some tea and sneaked another look at her. I was beginning to feel more natural, and wanted Jim again, now that the color was coming back into his face, and he didn't look like an unnaturally stiff and staring corpse. I felt a lump rising, and wanted to thank her. I sneaked another look at her.

She was staring straight before her—I never saw a woman's face change so suddenly—I never saw a woman's eyes so haggard and hopeless. Then her great chest heaved twice, I heard her draw a long, shuddering breath like a knocked-out horse, and two great tears dropped from her wide-open eyes down her cheeks like rain-drops on a face of stone. And in the firelight they seemed tinged with blood.

I looked away quick, feeling full up myself. And presently (I hadn't seen her look round) she said—

"Go to bed."

"Beg pardon?" (Her face was the same as before the tears.)

"Go to bed. There's a bed made for you inside on the sofa."

"But—the team—I must—"

"What?"

"The team. I left it at the camp. I must look to it."

"Oh! Well, Brighten will ride down and bring it up in the morning—or send the half-caste. Now you go to bed and get a good rest. The boy will be all right. I'll see to that."

I went out—it was a relief to get out—and looked to the mare. Brighten had got her some corn¹ and chaff in a candle-box, but she couldn't eat yet. She just stood or hung resting one hind leg and then the other, with her nose over the box, and she sobbed. I put my arms round her neck and my face down on her ragged mane, and cried like a boy for the second time since I was a boy.

As I started to go in I heard Brighten's sister-in-law say, suddenly and sharply—

"Take that away, Jessie."

And presently I saw Mrs. Brighten go into the house with the black bottle.

The moon had gone behind the range. I stood for a minute between the house and the kitchen and peeped in through the kitchen window.

She had moved away from the fire and sat near the table. She bent over Jim and held him up close to her and rocked herself to and fro.

I went to bed and slept till the next afternoon. I woke just in time to hear the tail end of a conversation between Jim and Brighten's sister-in-law. He was asking her out to our place and she promising to come.

"And now," says Jim, "I want to go home to 'muffer' in 'The Same Ol' Fling.'"

"What?"

Jim repeated.

"Oh! 'The Same Old Thing'—the wagon."

¹ Maize or Indian corn—wheat is never called corn in Australia.

The rest of the afternoon I poked round the gullies with old Brighten, looking at some "indications" (of the existence of gold) he had found. It was no use trying to "pump" him concerning his sister-in-law; Brighten was an "old hand," and had learned, in the old bush-ranging and cattle-stealing days, to know nothing about other people's business. And by the way, I noticed then that the more you talk and listen to a bad character, the more you lose your dislike for him.

I never saw such a change in a woman as in Brighten's sister-in-law that evening. She was bright and jolly, and seemed at least ten years younger. She bustled round and helped her sister to get tea ready. She rooted out some old china that Mrs. Brighten had stowed away somewhere, and set the table as I seldom saw it set out there. She propped Jim up with pillows and laughed and played with him like a great girl. She described Sydney and Sydney life as I had never heard it described before; and she knew as much about the bush and old digging day as I did. She kept old Brighten and me listening and laughing till nearly midnight. And she seemed quick to understand everything when I talked. If she wanted to explain anything that we hadn't seen, she wouldn't say that it was "like a—like a"—and hesitate (you know what I mean); she'd hit the right thing on the head at once. A squatter with a very round, flaming red face and a white cork hat had gone by in the afternoon; she said it was "like a mushroom on the rising moon." She gave me a lot of good hints about children.

But she was quiet again next morning. I harnessed up, and she dressed Jim and gave him his breakfast, and made a comfortable place for him on

the load with the 'possum rug and a spare pillow. She got up on the wheel to do it herself. Then was the awkward time. I'd half start to speak to her, then turn away and go fixing up round the horses, then make another false start to say good-bye. At last she took Jim up in her arms and kissed him, and lifted him on the wheel; but he put his arms tight round her neck, and kissed her—a thing Jim seldom did with anybody, except his mother, for he wasn't what you'd call an affectionate child—he'd never more than offer his cheek to me in his old-fashioned way. I'd got up the other side of the load to take him from her.

"Here, take him," she said.

I saw his mouth twitching as I lifted him. Jim seldom cried nowadays—no matter how much he was hurt. I gained some time fixing Jim comfortable.

"You'd better make a start," she said. "You want to get home early with that boy."

I got down and went round to where she stood. I held out my hand and tried to speak, but my voice went like an ungreased wagon wheel, and I gave it up, and only squeezed her hand.

"That's all right," she said; then tears came into her eyes, and she suddenly put her hand on my shoulder and kissed me on the cheek. "You be off—you're only a boy yourself. Take care of that boy; be kind to your wife, and take care of yourself."

"Will you come to see us?"

"Some day," she said.

I started the horses, and looked round once more. She was looking up at Jim, who was waving his hand to her from the top of the load. And I saw that haggard, hungry, hopeless look come into her eyes in spite of the tears.

Henry Lawson.

HEROINES AND BEAUTIES.

My own heart, "The Senile Heart," is lost to the most delightful of modern heroines. This lady is Celia in Mr. Alfred Sidgwick's novel, "The Inner Shrine." It is not about Esoteric Buddhism, as the title leads one to fear; it is about Celia. The novel is not a miracle of construction. I could not have done what the author does with Billy. Some may think the Major wooden, but only by being wooden could this military stoic avoid dishonor, under the most terrible temptations. The Clatworthys may be a little caricatured, but one can never forget them, especially Mr. Clatworthy, who, after being twice knocked down, was ready "to let bygones be bygones. A gentleman can say no more and no less." Lady Helen, too, is as original as she is sympathetic. But Celia alone is a jewel, a delightful, gay, honest English girl; without a touch of the modern in her frank and charming nature. I am sure she never even heard of Maeterlinck, and she would laugh at Ibsen. In fact if a reader wants to be honestly in love, now is his opportunity. To love Celia is indeed a liberal education.

So fair a creature reminds one of Beauty in general. I lately read a book by a lady, in which she took it for granted that beauty was universal in ancient Greece. But surely there is a Greek original, I forget where, of the passage in Lucretius about the lovers who adore the defects of the beloved, and they are just the defects which we see every day in pretty English faces. The pretty girls of Tanagra, in the clay figurines, are not classically perfect, and I do not suppose that the artists saw none but beauties, though, like Leech and Du Maurier, they made

all their young women pretty, as do our fashion-plates, granting the artists' peculiar ideal in these works of art. Perhaps we never do see an absolutely beautiful face, like that of the mutilated Psyche of Naples, for example. Possibly I did once see one, and it seemed so strangely familiar that I mentioned the name of a great living painter to the lady. Then she mentioned that she had sat for one of his most exquisite pictures of a Greek subject, and that was why the face of a stranger seemed familiar. No, one does not come across the ideal.

The prettiest faces seem to be worn in shops and omnibuses. They are not very common in the Park, rather notably the reverse. Nor are they very common in the "educated classes," or classes that are supposed to be educated. I mean among the ladies who have been firmly taught German, but cannot oblige one with a construe of a passage in that awful language. The prettiest persons are not of the class which has coped unsuccessfully with German and is highly cultivated. The old Houses, some of them, have for hundreds of years given birth to a series of beauties, "looking like angels," as an undergraduate wrote of Lady — — in 1643; our own generation has the counterpart of Lady — — in face and name. Natural selection comes in here, the wealthy being not without a good chance of deserving the fair. In a crowd neither men nor women look well—in a crowd or in a photographic group. A mass of schoolgirls make the observer despair, and a mob of schoolboys look all of one pattern. The finest head and most intellectual that I ever saw was that of a girl of fourteen looking over a gate in the

country. She resembled Shakespeare; but probably she is a dairymaid. Among our poets perhaps only Tennyson, Byron and Shelley looked the part; I speak but of the dead; many young poets look the part, but one is not so sure about the poetry.

Environment and climate have no doubt much to do with beauty—an original remark. There is an ancient city, much exposed to the east wind, where the children are pretty, but, as they grow up and fight the eastern blasts, things are no longer the same. Their ancestresses used wisely to wear masks, and Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Fleming and Mary Livingstone, with Mary Stuart, kept their looks. The cauld wind did not penetrate the masks or mufflers. Many places famed for beauty, like Arles, are disappointing. To be sure, at Arles we beheld no woman under fifty, so it would not be just to blame the town. There is an island famous for its verdure and its wrongs; I leave other critics to record their impressions of the beauty of its daughters, not selected examples, but on the average. An English town is known as "The City of the Plain," Queen Elizabeth is said to have remarked on the subject with despotic frankness. Without intending to be rude, I cannot help thinking that you see more handsome men in Germany than beautiful women; perhaps drill has something to do with it. If we could return to Athens for a day, old Athens, might we not be disappointed? These shawls over women's heads, like the kerchiefs of the women at Bologna, were perhaps deceptively becoming. In our time "fifty is the fashionable age," as Mr. Hardcastle is told in "She Stoops to Conquer." The decadent poets of the Greek anthology sometimes express the same taste very prettily. Still it is decadent. "Youth will be served," and "Sweet and Twenty" has a natural advantage over "Sweet and Forty,"

in spite of all the modern novelists. I like my heroines to be young and unmarried, in the good old way, while denouncing the juvenile and daring critic who spoke of Queen Guinevere as "a wall-flower."

When your heroine is a married woman, her husband never really has a fair show. He is always a brute. This cannot be the case in actual life, if looked at without prejudice. Nobody will have the courage to marry a pretty lady if he is to become, *ex officio*, a brute: "Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's husband." He was not a brute when he came wooing, or why did the heroine marry him? He was good-looking, brave, clever, "and just as religious as my Isabella likes." But when he has passed the altar, and entered on the run home, "long and dusty and straight to the grave" (said Mr. Stevenson cheerfully), then his character becomes too horrid. Then Another appears, a sympathetic Another. Now the charm of Cella (to whom I return fondly) is that the idea of philandering with a married man never even occurred to her mind, any more than the notion of shop-lifting. Mr. Sidgwick says a word or two about the elegant doctrine of Passion being an excuse for everything. How many passions? How often? Is the passion of hatred an excuse for dirking the object of your aversion? Is the passion for alcohol an excuse for stealing whisky? Is a passion for angling an excuse for getting over your neighbor's fence and catching your neighbor's trout? Why is a fancy for a moustache, or a gray eye or so, or even for a sympathetic person who likes the same poetry as you prefer, and is a saintly character, to be an excuse for the practises of our married heroines? Poaching is poaching, even when performed for the purest and most soulful motives, which unluckily, lead to those rather vulgar and distressing reports in the newspapers. Shake-

speare's married heroines are not all immaculate. But Lady Macbeth was quite loyal to Mac; so was Desdemona to her Moor (a brute, if you like); and generally I do not remember that Shakespeare ever invites our sympathies for our modern kind of married heroines. In a novel Desdemona would have been fond of Iago; Lady Macbeth of Macduff or Banquo; Imogen of What's-his-name, and so forth. Æschylus did not approve of Clytæmnestra; Homer had a low opinion of Ægis thus; and as for Helen of Troy, that

was fate, and she could not help it, and was very sorry afterwards. We hear plenty about the delightfully free and easy ideas of the Greeks, from critics not familiar with their literature. But Penelope was Homer's idea of what "one unceasing wife" ought to be, and Nausicaa, an unwedded maid, was his idea of a heroine. She was just like Cella—excuse my infatuation! All this is "simply not modern," as the Englishwoman who wrote the Love-letters says with an air of some superiority.

Longman's Magazine.

Andrew Lang.

THE FEAR OF NATURAL CATASTROPHES.

We wonder if any person in the world has been frightened by the appearance or disappearance of the new star in Perseus of which astronomers have recently made so much. Somebody ought to have been. The new light probably appeared because a sun had exploded, or because two suns had collided, evolving temporarily an almost inconceivable quantity of flame. If a distant sun could explode, so could our sun; and if two suns could collide some sun of which we know nothing may be rushing at a pace which the mind does not grasp, though the brain can calculate it, towards our own. There should be something alarming to the imaginative in that idea, but so far as we know nobody has been alarmed. The catastrophe in Perseus, whatever its cause, must have occurred fifty years ago to give the light time to get here, and catastrophes so inconceivably distant are outside the range even of the imagination. We read of them as we read of quintillions, grasping the words but not the thoughts they are intended to convey. The mass of man-

kind, too, are protected against astronomical alarms, not only by their ignorance, but by two very steady beliefs. One, which is not quite reasonable, is that God, though he allows railway collisions, will never allow anything so big as an astronomical catastrophe—as if there could be greatness or littleness in the eyes of the Infinite—and the other, which is reasonable enough, is that if an astronomical catastrophe affected sentient beings at all, it must destroy all of them within its range utterly and at once. That would only be death which we must all suffer, and death under unusual circumstances of consolation, death so rapid and so universal that we should part from no one and leave no one behind to suffer. There is much more to alarm in the little catastrophe which has possibly occurred within the last few days. An unaccountable wave has traversed ocean, nearly destroying the *Teutonic* for one thing, and showers of colored dust have obscured the sky from Sicily to the Carpathians, or possibly beyond them. The same phenomena on a

greater scale followed the volcanic explosion of 1883 in Krakatoa, and it is reasonable, therefore, to believe that either in the ocean, or more probably in the centre of Africa, there has been a grand volcanic eruption. Superheated steam generated by some outburst of water into the internal fires has caused an explosion lifting millions of tons of earth and pulverized rock into the air, which floats away at a high elevation in the form of dust. There is nothing to alarm in that by itself, for the event has come and gone, but that dust may conceivably be poisoned. The gases which are thrown out by such explosions are not healthy; and it is possible—Mr. R. A. Proctor the astronomer, in his book on "Other Worlds" (p. 14), evidently believes it certain—that with the dust much animal matter is also thrown into the air. He says:—"Even in the very bowels of the earth, and in the very neighborhood of active volcanoes, we find the volcano-fish existing in such countless thousands that when they are from time to time vomited forth by the erupting mountain their bodies are strewn over enormous regions, and as they putrefy beneath the sun's rays, spread pestilence and disease among the inhabitants of the neighboring districts." Clearly, if that is true, part of the dust which flies so far must be, or at least may be, composed of animal particles which putrefying spread disease. At all events there is much reason to believe that effects very inimical either to life or health do follow volcanic explosions, and that Southern Europe may, therefore, be visited shortly by some form of epidemic or some pest like the kind of influenza which *seemed*, at all events, to begin its ravages after Krakatoa was shattered. That is not pleasant to think of, and if the Southerners anticipate it, which is probable enough, their rush to the churches does not strike us as quite so

imbecilely superstitious as it strikes the makers of bulletins. Populations are composed of individuals, and prayer can never to the individual mind seem more attractive than when it is resorted to against a terror in presence of which energy and courage are alike unavailing.

We have always wondered a little why the dread of cataclysms enters so little into human calculations. There is no reason which can be stated why an epidemic, once raging, should not carry off a whole population, as seems to have happened in Cambodia; or why a fire, once started, should not consume a capital city, as one nearly did in Chicago; or why a storm wave thrown up by some sub-oceanic volcano should not sweep over a whole country, drowning alike man and beast, and salting the mould till it could bear no crop, as happened to a populous island in the Ganges; or why a volcanic eruption should not occur, say, in Southern Europe, on an inconceivably greater scale than that which destroyed Lisbon and the faith of Goethe. Those things have seldom happened; but they have happened, and they might any of them happen again and on a greater scale. The popular answer that God is too good, though it indicates a useful and, as we believe, a morally beneficial kind of faith, is not logically defensible, for sudden death under terrible circumstances happens every day, and the goodness of God cannot be arraigned or doubted merely because many deaths, all of them inevitable within a short period, are permitted to occur at once. The multiplication of the common fate does not increase the cruelty of that fate; rather to most minds it diminishes it. Nor is the reason a general submissiveness to irresistible law, for men shrink from death, which will come, shrink as they may, and the terror of an approaching comet seen in the heavens will shake

the nerves of whole populations. We suspect that as man is forbidden to see even five minutes ahead of the actual present, so his imagination has for the most part been mercifully dulled as to dangers not perceptible to his senses. At least we find it difficult to account otherwise for the entire disregard which, until the pestilence arrives, ordinary populations show for sanitary laws. Southern Italians are exceedingly, even exceptionally nervous in the presence of epidemics; but the Neapolitans, who when cholera breaks out, threaten their doctors, would rebel if their city were cleaned and drained till cholera could gain no hold. Even the English, who trust their municipalities and know their doctors will not poison them, are often immovable as to sanitary precautions, saying in their minds like an old caretaker whom the writer once reproved for mismanaging gas, "If we are to burn, we shall burn for sure." The mind will not take in more than it will hold, and if the Observatory people demonstrated that another world was approaching this one, and fifty years hence must

The Spectator.

collide with it, we doubt if the price of Consols would go down a point. There is a preservative as well as a destructive stupidity in most of us, and if we knew that the "red cloud" moving towards Northern Europe brought with it a new, possibly a dangerous, epidemic, there would be more symptoms of annoyance than of panic. Nevertheless, those who reason should not forget that our security against cataclysms can hardly be considered more than empirical, that we know, for example, very little of what a storm wave such as recently nearly destroyed Galveston could be or do, and that in particular our security against epidemics of a kind new to this generation has no scientific basis. We are cleaner than we were, but that is a poor defence against germs which travel through the air and enter by the mouth. All we can say about them is that panic is never a help, and that the English insensibility to panic about such things, though it does not preserve us from such dangers, is a grand protection to our general happiness.

LAMENTATION.

O early fall'n, uncrowned with envied laurel,
O lives that nameless come and noteless go,
Our vainly brave in an ignoble quarrel,
That fought unhating an unhating foe!

Ye pass, ye cease; in alien dust your dust is;
Carnage and tears depart not, wrath remains;
And Power derides the lips that counsel justice,
And nations wonder, and the world arraigns.

And foresight of how long the end yet tarries
To no man born of woman hath He given,
Who marshals all His flashing legionaries
Nightly upon the silent field of heaven.

William Watson.

DIANE DE POITIERS.*

Miss Hay, in compiling this thorough little monograph, has done her readers two services: the first to recall with exactitude the details of a famous life, the second to lend matter for that general reverie which is for our Europe a memory of youth.

There runs through the sixteenth century a quality that fascinates by contrast, tempts forward and yet alarms our own. You may call it *grandeur* or *freedom*, but its closest name would be nature itself. By which I do not mean that, even then, men could follow—as Rousseau asked them to at last—every instinct or mix entirely with the life of the world. The breaking of bonds and custom could but affect the rich, and, even for the rich, could affect but a small part of their lives, but that little drop of wild dew, slipped into a corner of the cask, worked all the wine of the State, and you find springing out of the ruins of the Middle Ages such vigorous and happy shoots of life as never yet were seen in Europe since the times of the Heroes. The lyrics, the plays, the random essays, the laughter that swelled out larger than satire or irony, the architecture which still moves us with a sense of vague luxury, and the judicious delight in learning, all these things lead on the vigorous race of these creative generations from Leonardo through Goujon to de l'Orme, from Erasmus through Rabelais to Montaigne. And of all the gods released from prison, Love and the Graces went first, even beyond the Muses. The air of the Renaissance was full of a charm that coquetted with license, and that discovered restraint and measure in nothing less

subtle than such fine rules as art and proportion might enforce. The spirit was almost that mixture of the careless gods and the good beasts that it pretended to be, even though it could, of its nature, last but a very little time. Though men must perforce re-enter sadness and perplexity even after such a holiday, yet for such time as it governed the rich of Europe it endowed them with a kind of noble ignorance as though they had touched a golden age and come to a place older than Eden, love without shame.

The great ladies who came into the ring of the Renaissance influence need a judgment special to themselves. For one must include in that gracious circle virtue and unrestraint, the wife and the mistress of a king. The purity of Dudley's bride who died yet a child, the luxury of the Valois court, the unforeseeing lightness of Mary Stuart, the hardness of Catherine, perhaps even the tortuous ability of Elizabeth must be taken as part of a general spirit at whose origins lay the nobility of Margaret of Navarre and the strange but simple influence that shone from the woman who has furnished the subject of this book. Why do all these varied characters stand together in the mind of history? Because they inspired in common a passionate and exalted devotion which was more like an act of worship than an effect of passion. It was as though first love had settled even in the debauch of the time. You will not surpass, you will hardly match in the phrases of the youngest lovers the mingled exaltation and simplicity with which these ladies were addressed; nor are we ashamed to have included in the list Catherine and Elizabeth, who happened to outlive the sincerity of their followers, but whose

* Madame Dame Dianne de Poytiers: a Monograph by Marie Hay. London: Bumpus. 1900. 25s. net.

youth had breathed the same generous air as the rest.

Diane de Poitiers very singularly summed up in herself this wonder of the sixteenth century. A devoted, careful wife and yet for a whole reign the unlawful mistress of a Court, tolerated so strangely by Catherine and ruling so openly with Henry, she epitomizes the character in which that generation stands separate from all that came before and after it. The episode was classical in its dignity of movement and yet it almost touched upon the grotesque in the contrast of its various parts. Consider that scene where the Rue St. Antoine widens out beyond the Hôtel de Ville, and where there used to stand in it like an island, the narrow green that was used for fairs and tourneys. It was there that Henry was to meet with his death wound from the lance of Montgomery. The summer tourney of 1559 was strictly a Court function; it was organized in honor of a royal marriage and it was arranged in all its details with that minute etiquette which even then had grasped the King. Yet the King rode into the lists for Diane; gave her the honor of his facile victories and actually wore her livery, streaming into the charge with great pennons of black and white for his ensign. Even if so much pageantry had been but an empty symbol, some Froissart piece of stage-play, it would have been strange enough. This last true man of the dying Valois, with his strong horsemanship, his long forceful melancholy face calling half Europe and its dignitaries to witness in the presence of the Queen such devotion to another woman. But it was much more than stage-play, for the whole of Henry's perilous sad heart had been taken up with Diane from the beginning of his youth; forging at white heat phrases worthy of a great poet, and thinking of her as the light of himself and of his kingdom.

The inexplicable character of that union continued after death. You may discover it in the great dignity of the letter she sent to Catherine, when the Medicean woman found her full power after her husband's death and broke Diane into exile. She was more the widow than Catherine, as she had been during Henry's life more the mother to Catherine's own children than Catherine herself had been. In her retirement, in the fairy-land of Anet, where she passed those last seven years, "making her soul," all the appurtenances of royalty came of themselves. De l'Orme built the Tuilleries for Catherine, but he built Anet for Diane. Goujon gave grudgingly or not at all to Paris after Henry's death, but everywhere at Anet his genius called up the French Renaissance and strengthened a hundred details. Palissy had his furnaces in the Tuilleries Gardens; his best work was in the service of Diane. She remained there, then, in a royalty of sorrow and something allied to but more noble than romance, making such a figure as the great soul of the sixteenth century loved to honor. The laced initials of her lover and herself, the "H. D.," might be effaced from the Louvre (one only remains), but she stamped them in profusion upon her splendid books and her hands touched them always on the binding as she read her Plato, and felt how her wide experience caught hands with the Greeks in spite of time. She dared to put the Crown above her arms, changing perhaps in old age the coronet of her birth and marriage into the Royal emblem; she quartered the Fleur de Lis. In the spring of 1556, she, who had never known autumn and whose unceasing beauty had been half the marvel of her life, died. She was nearly seventy years old. That also is a feature in which the sixteenth century works miracles, its contempt for time; the burden of Shakespeare's sonnets. This

woman was born just before the century itself. She was sixty years old when Henry had made that great show in her honor and had died, she was twenty years older than the man who had been absorbed in her grace and power.

But of all this story and of the eminent time which it illustrates and sums up, no character is more emphatic than its evanescence. The vision of the Renaissance passed in the deaths of but a score of men; the large air and the content in living, the endless experiment of freedom suddenly decayed. A little child that had seen Diane in her last years would indeed have passed his manhood in the traditions of this

The Saturday Review.

pagan liberty, but he would have spent his latter maturity and old age in the grinding of the counter-Reformation and the Puritan, in a welter of theological dust, in the beginnings of Bureaucracy, in the furbelows and laces and verbal quips of the seventeenth century; brick for stone in the houses of Mansard, and in the place of the splendid porticoes of Lescot, rococo stuff from Italy all plaster and twirls. And this which is the tragedy of the spirit of the sixteenth century is also what makes it stand out in separate relief against the background of History; that it had so sharp a beginning and so definite an end.

Hilaire Belloc.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

The Dowager Duchess of Argyll is to publish the memoirs of the late Duke of Argyll. These are in great part written by the Duke himself.

George Elliot's books are passing out of copyright in England and several competitive editions are promised. In spite of changing fashions in fiction, George Elliot holds her own well.

In December next year two hundred years will have elapsed since Peter the Great sanctioned the appearance of the first Russian newspaper, and the Bibliographical Society of Moscow is to celebrate the anniversary by publishing an *édition de luxe* of a volume containing a list of all Russian newspapers published during the two centuries. If it could be illustrated with fac-similes showing how some of these newspa-

pers looked after the censor got through with them its value would be enhanced.

Maurice Thompson's death has been made the occasion for the republication of a number of his earlier books. "Milly," a romance of the South, from the New Amsterdam Book Co., has a certain interest as showing the love of nature and outdoor life which gives to his later work so much of its charm, but it will not add to his present reputation.

The two latest volumes of "The Lark Classics" breathe the tender passion from cover to cover: "Love Letters of a Violinist," by Eric Mackay, and "Love Sonnets of Proteus," by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. Mr. Mackay has the true lyrical gift, and the love of which he sings is without profanation.

As for Mr. Blunt's sonnets, they express the varying moods of love—doing indifferently well what has been so often done by the great masters of song. Doxey's—*At the Sign of the Lark*, New York.

Picturesque in its scenery, interesting politically, and almost pathetic in some phases of its history, the island of Newfoundland holds a unique position. "Newfoundland in 1900" is a treatise written by Rev. M. Harvey, and published by S. E. Garland, at St. Johns, which describes the island with reference to its scenic attractions and its industries. The book is fully illustrated and may serve to lure some travellers from more beaten paths to try the routes of travel which have been recently opened up in the island.

It is reported that the important work upon which the late Mr. Frederick Myers was engaged, "Human Personality and its Survival After Death," was left in a sufficiently forward state to admit of its being completed by his literary executors. Its object is to present the evidence which "points to human faculty operating below the threshold of ordinary human consciousness during the life on earth, and to human faculty continuing to operate after death."

"The Curious Career of Roderick Campbell," as Jean V. McIlwraith describes it, opens in Scotland with the Jacobite rising of 1745, and closes in the New World, among the quarrels of French, Dutch and English colonists. Hairbreadth 'scapes abound, but no more numerous than history sanctions, and Roderick himself is a robust enough figure to dominate the narrative, and give to it a unity and coherence which the average historical story too often lacks. He holds his own as hero to the end, though the romance

of the plot centres in a gallant young nephew of his. Wholesome and readable throughout, with a pleasant touch of humor, the book is one to be heartily commended. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The new edition of Stevenson's "Letters" contains several new letters, among them this touching bit of confidence, written to Mr. Meredith in 1893, the year before Stevenson's death:—

For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physis bottle. At least I have not failed, but I would have preferred a place of trumpeting and the open air over my head.

It would be untrue to say that Katharine Tynan's work is not losing at all in quality by its quantity. But the stories that come from her hurrying pen are all so pretty, so wholesome, so admirably adapted to allay the insatiate craving of girlhood for pleasant fiction, that it seems ungracious to criticize them. In "A Daughter of the Fields" she describes the life of a young Irish girl of old but impoverished family, educated by the laborious self-denial of her mother at a convent school in France, and returning home to find adjustment to the old environment problem enough for all her talents. Letters and visits from school

friends give variety to the story, while the sympathetic portrayal of country life, which is the real distinction of Katharine Tynan's novels, is not lacking. Binding and type are well adapted to enhance the attractiveness of a very readable book. A. C. McClurg & Co.

A climatological character study is what Hamlin Garland's picturesque and vivacious novel, "*Her Mountain Lover*," may fitly be called. There is in it the wholesome and clearing quality of a fresh wind. The hero, Jim Matteson, has a mine to sell. One of the heroines has a novel to write. The young prospector, frank, determined, attractive, leaves his mountain solitudes for the miasmatic air of London, and is seized on as possible "good material" by the ambitious young writer, who aspires to be of the "degenerates," but is of better stuff than most of them. The resultant love affair, Matteson's precipitate return to the freedom of his own "high country," and the accompanying gradual but steady rise of a more wholesome romance, which reaches its happy conclusion only when he has at last guided the girl of his sanest choice to the topmost peak of his best-loved range, all this, with its harmony of light and color and mountain visions, makes a story effective, sympathetic and striking. The Century Co.

With the famine of fifty years ago for its subject, and Dr. William Barry's peculiarly dramatic gift of word-painting, "*The Wizard's Knot*" could hardly fail to be stirring, effective and vivid. The "wizard" is a poor old Irish pedagogue, a gatherer of simples, and dealer in the harmless arts of peasant magic, and he and many others of a different class are strangely tangled together in the knotty complications of the plot. The story turns on

the active enmity between a beautiful and faithless dame, Lady Liscarroll, and her son, the Irish baronet, while the next heir to the estate, the "Tan-ist," is one of the poet-scholars whom Dr. Barry is certain to draw with fidelity and probably with inward satisfaction. Of the two heroines, the peasant girl Joan is the more remarkable, but there is in her foil the young Russian Lisaveta with her passion for self-sacrifice, another reminiscence of the writer's favorite type of womankind. The action of the tale is quick, and the descriptions have often a dash of mysticism beneath their reality of color and light. The Century Co.

A French journal publishes an interesting letter from the author of "*Quo Vadis*," in which are given some particulars as to the origin of that book. Sienkiewicz writes:—

"I have been accustomed for some years to read the Latin historians before going to sleep. It was as much for the sake of the history, which in itself interested me profoundly, as in order to keep up my Latin. . . Tacitus attracted me the most as historian. While reading the '*Annals*' I more than once felt tempted to place side by side in an artistic work these two worlds, the one of which was a governing force and an administrative machine the strongest in the world, the other merely a spiritual power. I was tempted as a Pole by the victory of the mind over material force, and as an artist by the admirable forms that abounded in the antique world. Seven years ago, while in Rome, I visited the city and neighborhood, my Tacitus in my hand. I may say that my idea was already ripe, and I had only then to find my starting point. The chapel of '*Quo Vadis*,' the sight of the basilica of St. Peter, the Tre Fontane, the Albanian mountains provided it. Upon my return to Warsaw I began my historical studies, and my interest in the subject grew apace. Such is the genesis of '*Quo Vadis*.'"